■ Lifestyle / C2

The power of the monochrome

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Swank, Foxx, 'Sideways' grab top US awards

■ Business / B1

Honda to put up P1.3-billion motorcycle plant

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Manhunt on for Filipino 'hacker'

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Year of the Rooster: Buenas para sa 'Pinas?

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Thai leader Thaksin wins bigger mandate

BANGKOK—Thai voters yesterday appeared to have handed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra an unprecedented second term with an even bigger mandate in a victory propelled by strong support from the rural poor and his adroit handling of the tsunami disaster.

Opponents of the strong-willed prime minister, who accuse him of seeking dictatorship

THAI/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Monday, February 7, 2005 ★★ 74 pages / 6 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 61 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Even PNP camps suffer from population boom

By Christian V. Esguerra

SO MANY cops, so few camps.

Unless the Philippine National Police does something drastic and fast, the country's 120,000 police

EVEN/ A21

TAASAN NA LANG NATIN ANG HQ

US ruling on Marcos money elates Imelda

KA ANDRES and Ka Jose are greeted by women comrades in the New People's Army after exchanging marriage vows.

Reds officiate first gay marriage in NPA

THE NEWLYWEDS seal their "wedding contract" with a kiss.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

By Rolando B. Pinsoy
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DARE to struggle, dare to win ... as married gays.

After raiding a few Army camps, two communist guerrillas hid in a forest gorge and fell in love.

Deeply.

That was three years ago. On Friday, under a romantic drizzle in a muddy clearing in Compostela Valley in Mindanao, Ka Andres and Ka Jose exchanged vows in a heavily guarded ceremony before local villagers, friends from the city and their comrades in arms.

They are considered the first homosexual couple in the New People's Army who were wed by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

During the "wedding," sponsors draped a sequined CPP flag around the couple's shoulders. The flag was held in place by a long, beaded cord which also went around the couple and the sponsors—symbolizing that their marriage would be made stronger with the

REDS/ A20

All is not lost, Joker tells martial law victims

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño

IMELDA Marcos exulted at the news while those who suffered during her husband's rule either took it with resignation, despaired, or simply gnashed their teeth.

"This is big," the widow of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos told hundreds of supporters at Manila's Rizal Park yesterday.

She was referring to a US appeals court decision that American courts cannot overturn a Philippine Supreme Court ruling forfeiting $683 million in Marcos-linked assets to the government.

The decision came at the expense of more than 9,500 victims of human rights abuses during martial law, who had been awarded the money by a federal jury in a class suit in Hawaii. *(See related story on Page A21.)*

Dressed in red and flashing a victory sign, Mrs Marcos denied her husband's regime had tortured political dissidents during its 20 years in power.

"We did not even pinch (*kinurot*) a human right claimant," she said.

In an expansive mood, the Marcos widow declared: "We can tell the governments of the world ... and Switzerland, 'Hey, hey, hey, you don't have the right to take away the money that does not belong to you. To America, you don't have the right to use your power on foreigners, specially your Filipino friends."

While welcoming the US court's ruling acknowledging the sovereignty of the Philippine Supreme Court, Mrs. Marcos did not clarify why she would be elated over a verdict

US RULING/ A8

Plan to oust Edong from opposition bloc bared

By Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendaño

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada yesterday strongly hinted that moves were afoot in the opposition bloc to ease out Sen. Edgardo "Edong" Angara, his vice presidential running mate in 1998 and chief supporter of his late actor friend Fernando Poe Jr. in last year's presidential election.

Angara is the president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), one of the three parties that formed the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino that fielded Poe as its standard-bearer.

The two others were the Partido ng Masang Pilipino of Estrada and the Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Laban of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Estrada answered "not yet, I'm still thinking about it" when asked by the INQUIRER on the phone to confirm reports that he was about to sign a statement expelling Angara from the opposition ranks.

But when asked if indeed there were moves in this direction against the senator, he said "that's the consensus among the opposition, more or less."

"We're ... putting up an honest to goodness opposition," he said, adding that this "cleansing" process would be aimed at those who "enter into underground or backdoor deals" with the administration.

Asked to comment on Estrada's statement that there was consensus among opposition members to ease him out of the opposition bloc, Angara said: "If it's true that the consensus is to exclude the LDP from the opposition, the LDP would just be happy not to be associated with that new group."

In a phone interview, Angara said the LDP would rather "stay in the mainstream and moderate force than be identified with extremists."

He said Estrada's statement could only mean that "he has joined forces with (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson and his group."

Angara was referring to Lacson, a former member of LDP with whom he has a bitter feud. The two senators parted ways after Angara supported the presidential candidacy of Poe over Lacson, who ran for president on his own.

Estrada declined to elaborate on the so-called backdoor deals

PLAN/ A21

Pre-need firm chided for ads

SEN. Manuel Roxas II yesterday chided officials of College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) for spending P2 million in newspaper advertisements the past few days, saying the cash-strapped pre-need firm should have used the amount to settle its obligations to policy holders.

CAP had come out with full-page ads in newspapers, including the INQUIRER, to explain its side amid reports about its financial difficulties.

"Plan holders would have been better served had CAP instead used the money to partly settle millions of pesos worth of outstanding bounced checks," Roxas, chair of the Senate trade and

PRE-NEED/ A20

The lion roars to flatten Manobo lands

By Joey R.B. Lozano
Don Carlos, Bukidnon

SPECIAL REPORT

"IT'S LIKE hearing the roar of a lion ready to devour its next prey," the terrified Manobo woman said.

Around her were about 50 children and elderly people, who chorused that they had been sleepless for almost a week, fearful that a nocturnal attack, as what had happened in the past, was forthcoming to drive them out completely.

They were referring to a bulldozer less than a kilometer away from the tribal community in Barangay San Nicolas, Don Carlos town in Bukidnon. From where they stood, a mature sugarcane field that had just been set on fire can be seen.

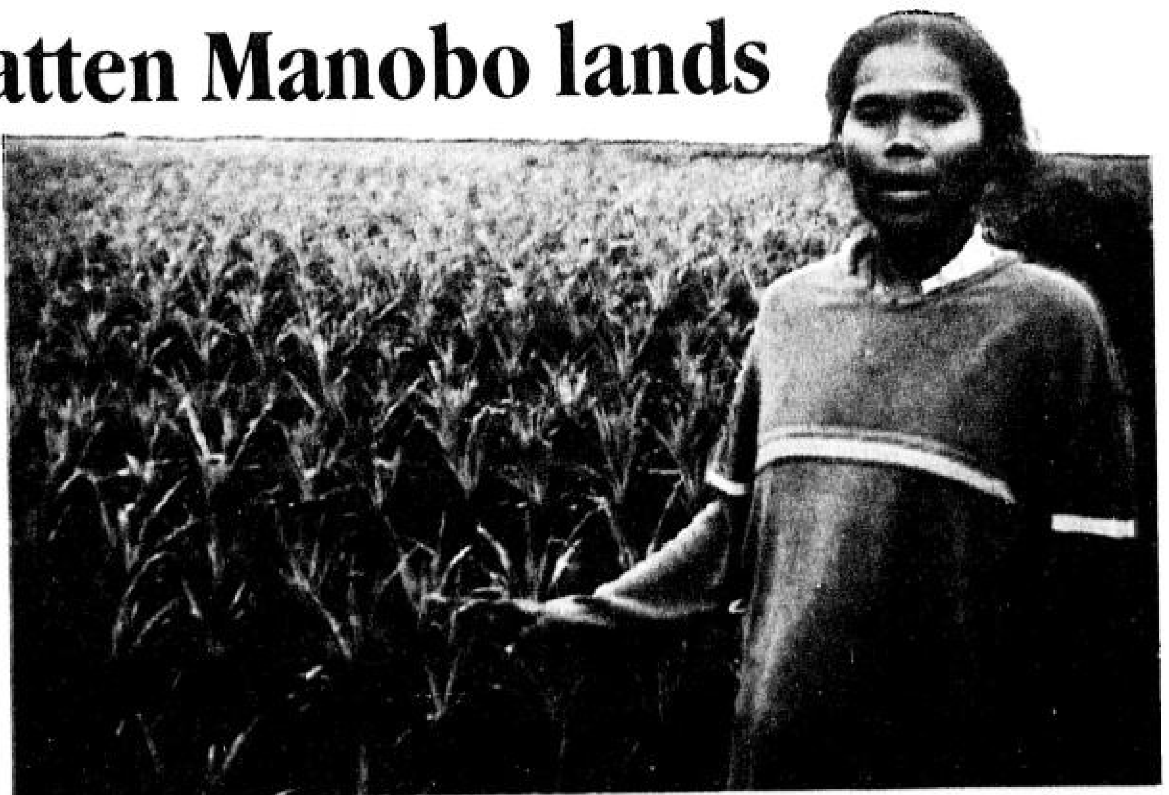
Except for the coconut trees, the bulldozer had reduced to waste fields planted to corn, cassava and other root crops in the area the Manobos regard as ancestral land. Damage has been estimated at P1 million so far, and the toll continues to rise with the heavy equipment's unhampered operation.

Last Dec. 22, some of the residents tried to get near the bulldozer but were stopped by a volley of gunfire. Three persons were slightly wounded.

When Jerry Latac, a village councilor, came to verify the attack, he, too, was shot and hit in the neck. The bullet exited through his back.

He would have been dead had he not sought cover behind a coconut tree, Latac said while recuperating in a hospital in

THE LION/ A22



A MANOBO woman shows the newly planted pineapples in a field that was once devoted to traditional root crops of the tribal community.

JOEY R.B. LOZANO

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Second FRONT PAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers or thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/07/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Oil firms told: Explain price hikes

By Abigail L. Ho

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez yesterday asked local oil companies to explain their decision to raise pump prices despite the declining prices of oil in the world market.

In a statement yesterday, Perez said oil refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and independent players Eastern Petroleum Corp., Flying V and Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. would have to come up with suitable explanations for their actions.

Shell, Eastern, Flying V and Unioil yesterday raised the pump prices of diesel and kerosene by 30 centavos a liter and of unleaded gasoline by 40 centavos a liter. Shell also jacked up the price of its cooking gas by 40 centavos a kilo or P4.40 per 11-kg cylinder.

Caltex Philippines Inc. yesterday also announced that it would follow the lead of its competitors.

At 12:01 a.m. today, Caltex raised gasoline prices by 40 centavos a liter, diesel and kerosene prices by 30 centavos a liter, and LPG prices by 40 centavos per kg.

While he admitted that the price of crude and unleaded gasoline went up in January vis-à-vis December, Perez said that the price of diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products slightly decreased in January as compared with December.

MOPS-based diesel averaged $51.26 a barrel in January, shedding 7 US cents from the December average of $51.33 a barrel.

"We want to know why they also raised the cost of diesel," he said.

Perez said that the oil firm should not only explain their actions to the Department of Energy but more so to the consuming public.

He also pointed out that the international contract price of liquefied petroleum gas in February remained the same as the January price of $369 per metric ton.

"So why is there also an adjustment in LPG?" he said.

The energy chief called on consumers to exercise their power of choice, pointing out that there were still some oil firms that have not raised their pump prices.

NUJP proposes trauma centers for journalists

By Nelson F. Flores

THE NATIONAL Union of Journalists of the Philippines last week called for the establishment of trauma centers for journalists exposed to danger and hostile conditions while reporting the news.

Inday Espina-Varona, NUJP president, said it was the responsibility of media owners to take care of journalists by providing them with trauma centers where they could seek help from professional counselors.

"Journalists who cover war and conflict are also traumatized," Varona said.

What makes the situation worse is that those exposed to more danger are the correspondents, not regular employees of media, she added.

"These correspondents should be given the same benefits as regular employees when covering harrowing assignments," Varona stressed.

She warned that if proper steps were not taken by media owners, journalists would end up hardened by these traumatic experiences, so they become less professional in their coverage.

Meanwhile, the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists yesterday expressed dismay over the refusal of President Macapagal-Arroyo to meet with NUJP representatives to discuss the rising number of journalists killed in the Philippines.

Gerard Noonan, IFJ representative and Sydney Herald reporter, said they were dismayed that Malacañang canceled their scheduled meeting despite the gravity of the situation. He said he would file the appropriate report to the IFJ headquarters in Brussels within the next two weeks.

WPD official linked to ex-NBI agent

By Christian V. Esguerra

INVESTIGATORS are looking into the possible involvement of a Western Police District superintendent and Traffic Management Group personnel in the criminal activities of former agent Martin Soriano.

The information came from Soriano's former comrades at the National Bureau of Investigation who are conducting their own "silent investigation" into his illegal activities.

A ranking NBI official yesterday said they were collecting evidence against Soriano so they won't be caught flat-footed in case NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco orders a separate investigation.

So far, the effort has identified a WPD superintendent who allegedly served as Soriano's "padrino" or backer, in the latter's group "hulidap" activities.

The police official allegedly provided the ex-agent with men in his racket of arresting and squeezing money from drug suspects.

"Soriano turned to him as soon as he was kicked out of the NBI and his fellow agents turned against him," the NBI official told the INQUIRER.

Sought for comment, Director Robert Delfin yesterday said it was "unfair" to accuse the WPD official since formal complaints have yet to be filed against Soriano's alleged accomplices.

Delfin, the police director for intelligence, heads the investigation in his capacity as chief of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response team, the group that arrested Soriano in an entrapment operation in Quezon City last Monday.

"The proper thing to do is to gather complainants and ask each of them about what they know about Soriano's criminal activities," he said in a phone interview. "Then we'll ask them to file a formal complaint. We hope to finish this in the coming days."

Besides "hulidap" activities he purportedly shared with the WPD superintendent, Soriano and his group were also into car theft, the NBI source said. This was where his contacts at the TMG allegedly step in.

"He needed his TMG friends so he could legitimize the vehicles that his group had stolen," the NBI official explained.

Among the vehicles were those high rollers would "pawn" and eventually yield to Soriano's syndicate during casino sessions, he claimed.

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Strong RP quake stirs panic in neighboring Malaysia

THOUSANDS of people in Malaysia's Sabah state on Borneo island fled coastal areas for higher ground when officials warned of a possible tsunami after a strong earthquake hit Mindanao Saturday night, officials said Sunday.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology told the INQUIRER that the quake had a magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter scale. There were no reports of casualties or damage. It shook houses in Davao City but caused no panic, an INQUIRER staffer in the area said.

A Phivolcs bulletin said the quake struck at 8:23 p.m. and was centered 157 km southwest of Isulan, in Sultan Kudarat province. The tremor, which came from the sea at a depth of 509 km, lasted for several minutes but caused no tsunamis, seismologist Imelda Guanio of Phivolcs said.

The quake, however, prompted the Malaysian Prime Minister's Crisis and Disaster Center to issue its first-ever tsunami alert.

Center director Muhamad Muda said parts of Sabah, especially the state capital Kota Kinabalu, Tawau and several coastal areas, felt the tremor.

Malaysian police urged locals in some areas to evacuate coastal homes. Several seaside resorts on Sabah's west coast immediately alerted their guests. Police were seen in many places calming the public after midnight as they refused to leave mosques and other higher ground for fear that a tsunami might strike.

Even after the alert was scaled down, some Sabahans were still jumpy. "We are not taking any chances," Mohamad Affendi, 44, told AFP as he made his way to the hills.

Various countries have been sensitive to reports of big earthquakes in the wake of last month's huge tremor in Indonesia which unleashed giant tsunami waves and killed about 200,000 people in southern Asia.

The tremor was felt at intensity 3 on a scale of 9 in Davao and General Santos cities.

Residents of the two cities said they noticed a mild shaking but there were no signs of damage.

"It was very deep, that's why we have not received any reports of damage or casualty," Phivolcs science research assistant Mylen Carlos said on the phone.

"Unlikely, but we are still monitoring," said Antonio Cloma, operations officer at the Davao Office of Civil Defense, when asked if the quake could generate tsunamis. *AFP*

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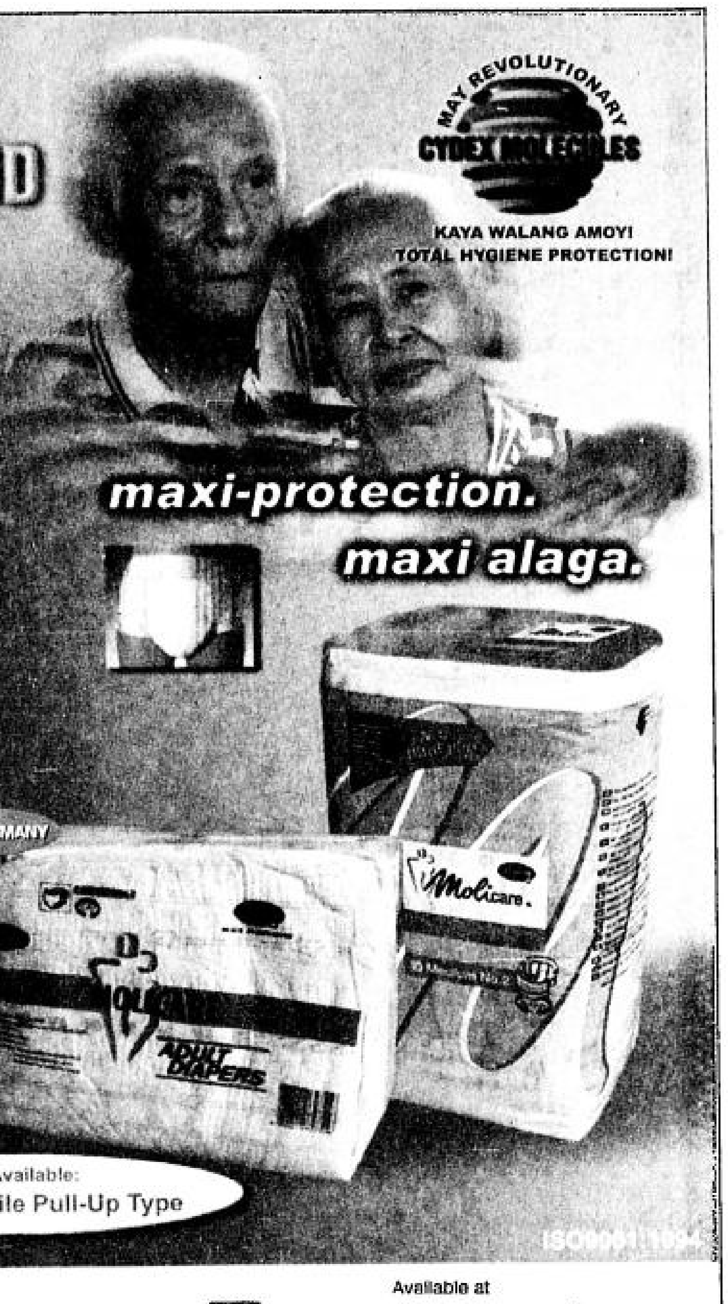
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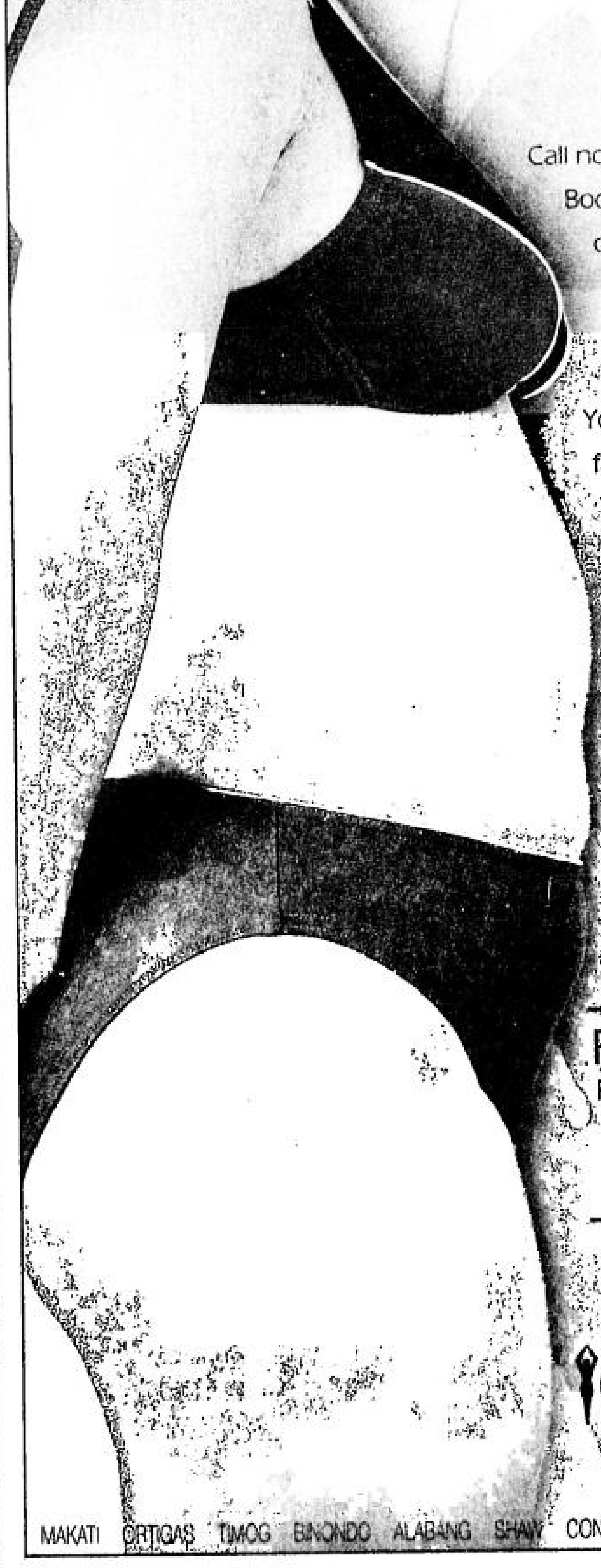

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2 Abu Sayyaf suspects nabbed in Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Two suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group were captured after a brief firefight with soldiers in a remote village in Sacol Island here early Saturday morning.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza said military intelligence agents clashed with a group of bandits on the island.

Braganza identified the captured Abu Sayyaf members as Abdulla Uttoh and Bibi Uttoh. An M-16 Armalite rifle was recovered from the duo, he said.

He said the arrested bandits were still being interrogated.

Braganza said after the clash, the military intensified its operations against the fleeing bandits.

"They are fully armed," he said of the group that clashed with the soldiers.

Marines and Navy intelligence agents were approaching the suspected Abu Sayyaf hideout on Sacol Island on Saturday when about 20 suspected rebels opened fire, setting of the clash, marine spokesperson Capt. Rommel Abrau said.

Some of the other rebels may have been wounded because of blood stains found on their escape route, Abrau said in a statement.

Soldiers launched the raid after informants tipped them off about a planned rebel meeting on Sacol Island, he said. Sacol lies near the Zamboanga peninsula and Basilan island.

There were no casualties on the government side.

The Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for a rash of kidnappings targeting foreigners and for bomb attacks in recent years. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau with AP, AFP reports*

SC purges 56 erring judges from judiciary

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court sanctioned or kicked out from the judiciary 56 negligent and dishonest judges last year.

Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban told a conference on judicial excellence at the Westin Philippine Plaza that since democracy was restored in 1986, the number of magistrates penalized by the high tribunal has reached 582.

"Legally knowledgeable judges who have no regard for ethics are dangerous to society; they may turn out to be worse than the criminals they sentence to jail," Panganiban said. "They are the scum and the scourge of the judiciary."

Panganiban said the 56 judges were either reprimanded or dismissed outright from the judiciary. He did not say how many were sacked from their post.

The erring judges were penalized for bias, dishonesty, misconduct, immorality, abuse of discretion, undue delay in rendering decisions, knowingly rendering judgements, dereliction of duty, negligence and conduct unbecoming of a judge, he said.

Panganiban urged erring judges to "transform old habits of laziness, ineptness and duplicity into ethical values of industry, competence, and honesty." He said the Canons of Judicial Ethics and the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary must be "rigorously" followed.

A recent Social Weather Stations survey had shown that corruption was still very much a problem in the judiciary.

However, the high court noted in a statement that there were still many judges that adhered to exemplary judicial conduct.

Last December, the court awarded several judges during its 2004 Search for Outstanding Judges, Clerks of Court, and other Judicial officers.

The awardees included Makati Judge Sixtor C. Marella, newly appointed Court of Appeals Justice Myrna Dimaranan-Vidal, and Quezon City Judge Agustin S. Dizon.

For first level court judges, the awardees were judges Myra V. Garcia-Fernandez of Manila, Ralph S. Lee of Quezon City and Danila P. Camacho of Baguio City.

"The awardees significantly contributed to the public perception of the judiciary—in terms of honesty, diligence, and avoiding impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities—and for their notable efforts in upholding judicial integrity and independence," the statement added.

Madrigals insist on option to buy lots

MEMBERS of the landed Madrigal clan have asked the Supreme Court to allow them to show evidence that the Ayala family gave them the option—not a right of first refusal—to buy four lots in Ayala Alabang, currently the cause of dispute between the two wealthy families.

In a three-page motion to admit, couple Luisa Madrigal-Vazquez and her husband Daniel Vazquez said they had letters written in 1990 from Ayala Corp. showing that the Ayalas granted them the right of first option to buy the four lots.

"The attached letters clearly show that respondent intended to grant petitioners an 'option' and not a 'right of first refusal,'" the couple said.

They had earlier asked the high court to reverse its previous ruling which they said deprived them of the right to buy the four lots.

The tiff between members of the two clans began after the Vazquez couple claimed that the Ayalas reneged on an agreement that allowed the Madrigals to buy four lots from the Ayala Corp. after these were sold to the Ayalas in 1981.

They claimed that under a memorandum of agreement with Don Enrique Zobel and Don Jaime Zobel De Ayala of the Ayala Corp., they had the right to purchase the lots.

They said they should be allowed to buy the four developed lots totaling 2,943 square meters at 1984 prices of P458.59 per square meter or P1,349,640 instead of P6,000 per square meter or over P17 million which Ayala was asking them to pay.

The couple had asked the high court to peg the lots' price at 1984 prices.

But in November last year, the tribunal's Second Division upheld a Court of Appeals ruling that under the MOA, the Vazquez couple only had the right of first refusal, not an option to buy the lots.

In their motion, the couple said that a letter dated March 15, 1990, from then Ayala Land president Francisco Licuanan to their counsel, lawyer Enrique Belo, showed that they had the right to buy the lots.

"Your client's first option to purchase four developed lots next to the Retained Area at the prevailing market price still holds. However, the License to Sell for the entire phase has not yet been released and we, therefore, cannot even offer these lots for sale. Please be assured, however, that once the License to Sell is released, we will get in touch with you," Licuanan said in his letter. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Sale of SMC shares backed, rejected

PRO-ADMINISTRATION lawmakers yesterday supported as "timely and justified" Malacañang's decision to sell government shares in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

In a joint statement, Lakas Representatives Exequiel Javier (Antique) and Marcelino Libanan (Eastern Samar) said the sale comes amidst a "bullish stock market, the sterling performance of SMC and the need for revenues to fund the government's agenda."

But peasant advocate and party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano (Anakpawis) cautioned the government not to go too fast with the disposition of the SMC shares.

Mariano reiterated his earlier recommendation to set up a small coconut farmers trust fund which shall administer proceeds from the recovery of the coconut levy fund.

Up for sale is 27 percent of SMC shares which the courts have determined to have been acquired by SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. through the coconut levy collected during the term of his late associate, President Ferdinand Marcos.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said over the weekend that proceeds from the sale will be used to rehabilitate the coconut industry.

Aside from the 27 percent shares, the government is also putting on the auction bloc the shares held by the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System constituting more than 11 percent of total SMC shares.

"There is no assurance that small coconut farmers will directly benefit from the sale," Mariano said. "The rightful owners which are small coconut farmers should decide where and how to use the funds."

Mariano has been finalizing a proposed bill providing for the creation of a small coconut farmers trust fund and intends to file the bill soon.

Javier, vice chair of the House committee on ways and means, said the sale of all government holdings in the SMC will "ensure the government gets maximum price possible since the winning bidder ends up controlling almost 40 percent of the firm." *Carlito Pablo*

BULLETIN NO. 3:
COPW UPDATE on Senate Hearings on VAT

1. The COPW has been attending all the Senate Hearings on VAT and it is our observation that during the deliberations, many of the various sectors that are VAT-exempt, such as petroleum products, coal and natural gas, GenCos, IPPs, cooperatives, book printing and publishing, and the professional services of doctors and lawyers want to maintain a status quo position and do NOT offer a compromise solution.
2. On the other hand, the Government, Department of Energy (DOE), National Power Corporation (NPC) PSALM, Department of Finance (DOF), BIR, Bureau of Customs, and the affected sectors invited are not proactive in anticipating the information and data that the Senators are requesting.
3. We urge the sectors invited and the government agencies concerned to COME UP with a PRINT AD to inform the public who will be burdened by the higher taxes to respond to the information that the COPW and the Senate are requesting, which are as follows:

VAT ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
The COPW is amenable to the compromise solution of Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Ralph Recto that the proposed increase in excise tax on DIESEL of 60 centavos per liter will be reflected instead as a VAT which will mean a VAT rate lower than 12% PROVIDED *the Oil Companies, the DOE and the DOF simulate the cost per liter with and without VAT.*

SHELL, PETRON, CALTEX AND TOTAL MUST COME OUT WITH A PRINT AD
1. To inform the consuming public that they favor VAT over the excise tax because it will create a paper trail to curb smuggling.
2. To state that the current average price of diesel is P23.40 and the pump price at the gas stations will NOT be higher than P24.00 which will reflect the 60 centavos increase.
3. To inform the consuming public of their computation of the VAT rate to be imposed which will arrive at P24.00. Should the VAT rate be lower than 4% or 5%, the additional VAT amount should NOT be passed on to the consumer until the price of diesel has gone down.

OIL SMUGGLING
Since the market share of the Group is 80% to 85%, the public will appreciate the magnitude of the loss in revenue due to smuggling, if the four major companies will make public the consolidated excise tax they paid in 2003 and in the first 3 quarters of 2004 for gasoline and diesel and the estimated uncollected tax due to outright smuggling or misdeclaration. The public wants an assurance that the revenues derived from the VAT system will be substantially higher than the excise tax and that the four major oil companies will be proactive in helping contain smuggling by working closely with the Bureau of Customs and Coast Guard.

DOE AND CUSTOMS MUST COME OUT WITH A PRINT AD
Progress report on the four measures to curb smuggling submitted by the COPW to Customs Commissioner Jereos, DOE Task Force on Smuggling, ALL Oil companies and Coast Guard present last October 6th:
1. Submission by all oil companies of the list of their depots for diesel and gasoline and their storage capacity nationwide.
2. Status on the list of accredited oil companies allowed to import gasoline and diesel submitted to the Bureau of Customs and the COPW.
3. Status on the DOE Permit requiring accredited oil importers to state the product, date of arrival and Bill of Lading prior to importing, whether this is immediately transmitted to the Bureau of Customs, and a report submitted on the BOC Findings.
4. The total excise tax collection for gasoline and diesel in 2003 and the first 3 quarters in 2004.

VAT ON POWER
1. The COPW is against the imposition of VAT on electricity sold by the power-generating companies, IPPs and NAPOCOR as this will be an added burden to the consuming public.
2. Last September 26, 2004, there was already an increase of P1.15 per kWh in power nationwide by NAPOCOR. There remains a balance of 90 centavos plus under recoveries by NAPOCOR which have yet to be acted on by the ERC.
3. When the VAT is imposed on power, the increase will be substantial in the Luzon grid by P0.80 to P1.20 per kWh to include the pass-on cost of Meralco. This is because currently, power generated by NPC-owned and operated plants and those operated by IPPs is VAT-exempt.

COPW PROPOSAL OF 2% VAT INSTEAD OF 10 or 12%
We proposed to the Senate Ways and Means Committee that we are amenable to a 2% VAT on power instead of 10 or 12% VAT to put all sectors in the VAT system.

THE DOE, NPC AND PSALM MUST COME OUT WITH A PRINT AD
1. To explain the increase in power rates when VAT is imposed at a rate of 10-12% on NPC and IPPs.
2. PSALM must submit a listing of power plants with IPP Contracts, the period of Income Tax Holidays and the remaining years they are entitled to avail of.
3. PSALM must explain why the IPPs should be exempted from the payment of corporate income tax when they are enjoying a guaranteed Return On Rate Base (RORB) profits approved by the ERC.

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₱100M worth of lumber seized off Batangas

By Nancy Carvajal

AUTHORITIES seized a shipload of lumber worth an estimated P100 million off the coast of Isla Verde near Batangas following a tip-off from the office of Sen. Jamby Madrigal.

Madrigal personally led media men Saturday afternoon to the seized lumber loaded on a ship anchored off Sangley Point in Cavite City.

Madrigal told reporters that the information about the hot lawaan lumber was provided by her office after concerned citizens called through hotline numbers to report the controversial shipment.

"I hope this campaign continues because we should get these illegal logs by the boat and not only by the truckload," Madrigal said in an apparent dig at her nemesis, Environment Secretary Mike Defensor, who had recently apprehended several trucks of hot lumber.

Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes joined Madrigal at the Navy base in Sangley Point.

Loaded with lumber, M/V B and E Tres was on its way to the North Harbor in Manila from Diapitan in Aurora province when it was intercepted by the Philippine Navy off Isla Verde near the province of Batangas on Friday morning.

M/V B and E Tres captain Rufo Jemores revealed that the boat was carrying 3,335 cubic meters of processed lawaan in 2,010 bundles.

"We had a permit to transport and bring it to Pier 10 ," the captain of the vessel told the INQUIRER.

He said all the shipping documents were submitted to the apprehending team of the Navy for verification. The documents, he said, were given to him by the lumber caretaker in Aurora named Felix Paraonda.

"The shipper's name was Luzon Mahogany Timber Inc.," Jemores said, when asked about the owner of the lumber shipment.

He also said that their other boat, M/V B and E Cinco, which was carrying more than a thousand round logs from Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, was also intercepted a few hours earlier but was released and is now docked at Pier 10.

"Maybe their papers had been cleared, that's why they were released," the captain said in Filipino.

Madrigal, upon learning that another boat got away, immediately ordered the Navy boat to go to Pier 10.

The Navy boat, however, did not proceed to Pier 10 but docked at the Philippine Navy headquarters along Roxas Boulevard.

No explanations were given why the group did not proceed to Pier 10 to check on the other boat which Madrigal earlier said could have been owned by certain influential people who facilitated its speedy release.

Madrigal said she found out that the other boat was already turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"I am just wondering why the DENR was quick to respond and who could have tipped them off," Madrigal said.

She added that she found it strange that DENR employees were working on a Saturday and that they fetched the boat when they were just supposed to wait at the pier.

SEN. JAMBY Madrigal and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes inspect P100 million worth of lawaan in Sangley Point, Cavite City. RYAN LIM

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Party-list group bucks lateral attrition law

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHAT about us?

A party-list group, representing the country's teachers, has asked the Supreme Court to void the Lateral Attrition Act of 2005, which provides financial rewards and incentives to customs and revenue officials to improve their collections.

In a 13-page petition, the Abakada Guro party-list group asked the high tribunal to nullify the law for allegedly violating the equal protection clause of the 1987 Constitution since it does not provide teachers and other government employees with the same incentives.

"Teachers, tasked to provide quality education at all levels, equally deserve to be given rewards and incentives for excellent work. Plaques, trophies and certificates of appreciation cannot fill the stomach of a hungry teacher," the group said.

"Neither can mere medals and citations satisfy the needs of policemen and soldiers," it added.

The party-list group said "no valid reason exists" why other government employees should not be given the "same opportunities to earn additional income" granted to employees of the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

"(Soldiers and policemen) maintain peace and order and safeguard society against lawless elements with their lives. Their duties are as vital as revenue collection," the Abakada Guro said.

"Just like revenue collectors, policemen and soldiers deserve monetary rewards and incentives for excellent service," it added.

The group said the law also violated the constitutionally guaranteed security of tenure of BIR and BoC employees.

Under the law, BIR and BoC employees may be dismissed when their revenue collections fall short of the target "by at least" 7.5 percent. However, the law naturally did not fix the revenue targets to be achieved, the group said.

"The fixing thereof has been delegated to the President without sufficient standards. It would therefore be very easy for the President to fix an unrealistic and unattainable target in order to dismiss BIR or BoC personnel," the group said.

"The law is unreasonable, oppressive, allows abuse of power, and makes a mockery of the security of tenure of BIR and BoC employees," it added.

Palace backs deferment of barangay polls

MALACAÑANG is open to a proposal to allow mayors to handpick barangay officials in their respective districts to hasten the implementation of city and municipal projects.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye noted that this practice had been tried in the country when Malacañang adopted the scheme shortly after the 1986 Edsa People Power revolution.

"Those who were sitting then as officers in charge were given the right to appoint barangay captains," said Bunye in an interview with dzBB radio.

"At that time there was not much politics involved because all of those in power were members of the same party allied to the administration," Bunye said.

Bunye was reacting to a proposal by Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos to have barangay officials chosen by the city and municipal mayors to generate savings for the cash-strapped government.

But Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel, Jr. (PDP-Laban) rejected this proposal because the three-year term extension was "an odious ploy" to give administration candidates the edge in the 2007 senatorial, congressional and local elections.

Bunye said the main advantage of this scheme was the speed and success in implementing local government projects. "The programs that the incumbent wants are quickly put in place because those who are tasked to implement them are his allies," Bunye said.

But Bunye stressed that giving mayors such powers to appoint also has its disadvantages, such as perpetuating the power of one person or family in a city or municipality.

Malacañang is amenable to the postponement of the barangay elections scheduled this year to May 2008 to generate savings for the government amid its cash flow problems.

Bunye said the deferment would lead to savings of at least P2 billion and ease the divisiveness in barangays across the country.

The ruling Lakas in the House of Representatives has endorsed the proposal seeking a deferment of the barangay polls to the second Monday of May 2008, when the government's financial problems would have been brought down to manageable levels. *Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.*

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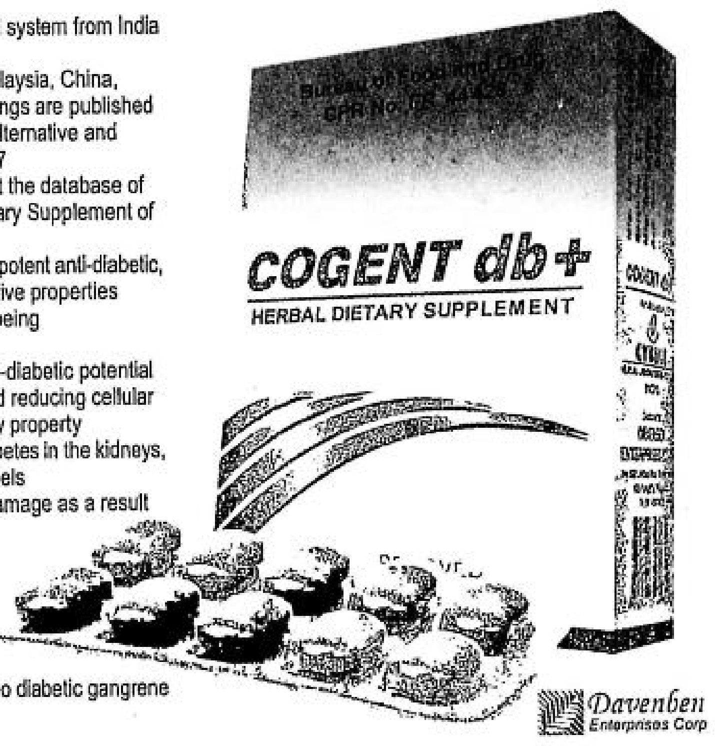

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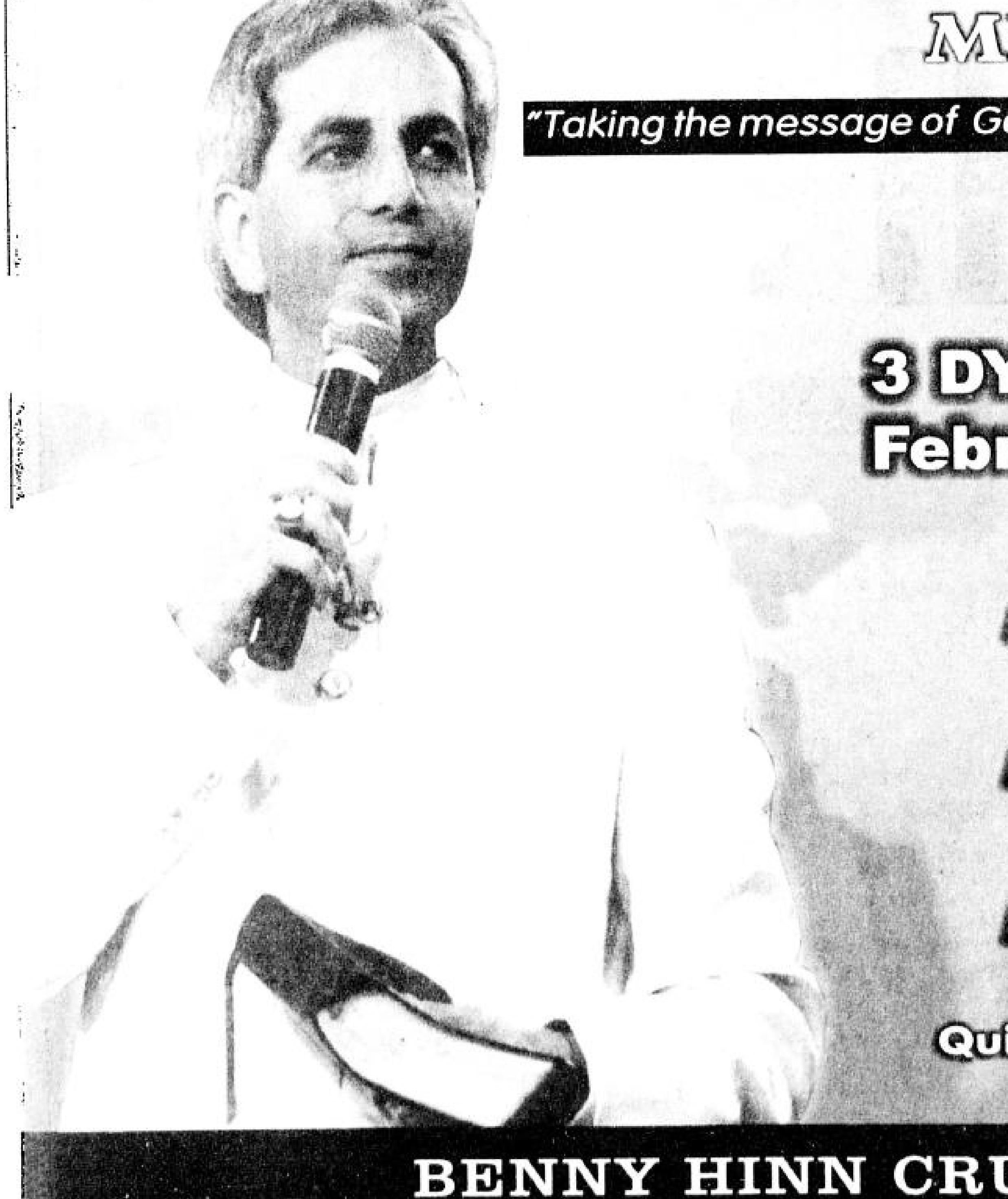

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Pinay maids in HK protest cut in minimum wage

HONG KONG—About 1,000 maids from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Nepal marched through downtown Hong Kong on Sunday to protest a US$50 reduction in the minimum monthly salary for domestic helpers.

The demonstrators walked peacefully from an urban park to Hong Kong government headquarters wearing paper hats that said "Bring back 3,670"—a reference to their original minimum monthly salary level of 3,670 Hong Kong dollars (US$470).

The government slashed the maids' pay by HK$400 (US$50) to HK$3,270 (US$420) in 2003, in a move it said was necessary to weather Hong Kong's economic recession at the time.

The maids say the cut undermines their ability to support families back home, where a small difference in pay—by Hong Kong standards—can translate into a big difference in living standards.

"It's a big impact for us. Four hundred dollars is a big amount that we can spend," said Anna Manao, 37, a native of of Marinduque.

"I need that (amount) for my grandchildren... they are all students," said 68-year-old Nelly Bonuel of Angeles City, who has worked in Hong Kong for 32 years.

Organizers didn't have an immediate head count for Sunday's protest. Police said about 1,000 attended.

The maids have repeatedly protested the wage cut and launched a lawsuit against it. The legal challenge failed but the maids are appealing.

One demonstrator said the domestic workers will be persistent.

"We will not stop fighting for this," said Nelly Clama, a 29-year-old native of Iloilo.

As of the end of November, more than 218,000 foreigners worked as domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Most come from the Philippines, with smaller numbers from Indonesia, Thailand and Nepal. *AP*

ASIAN domestic helpers shout slogans during a protest in front of government offices in Hong Kong on Sunday. AFP

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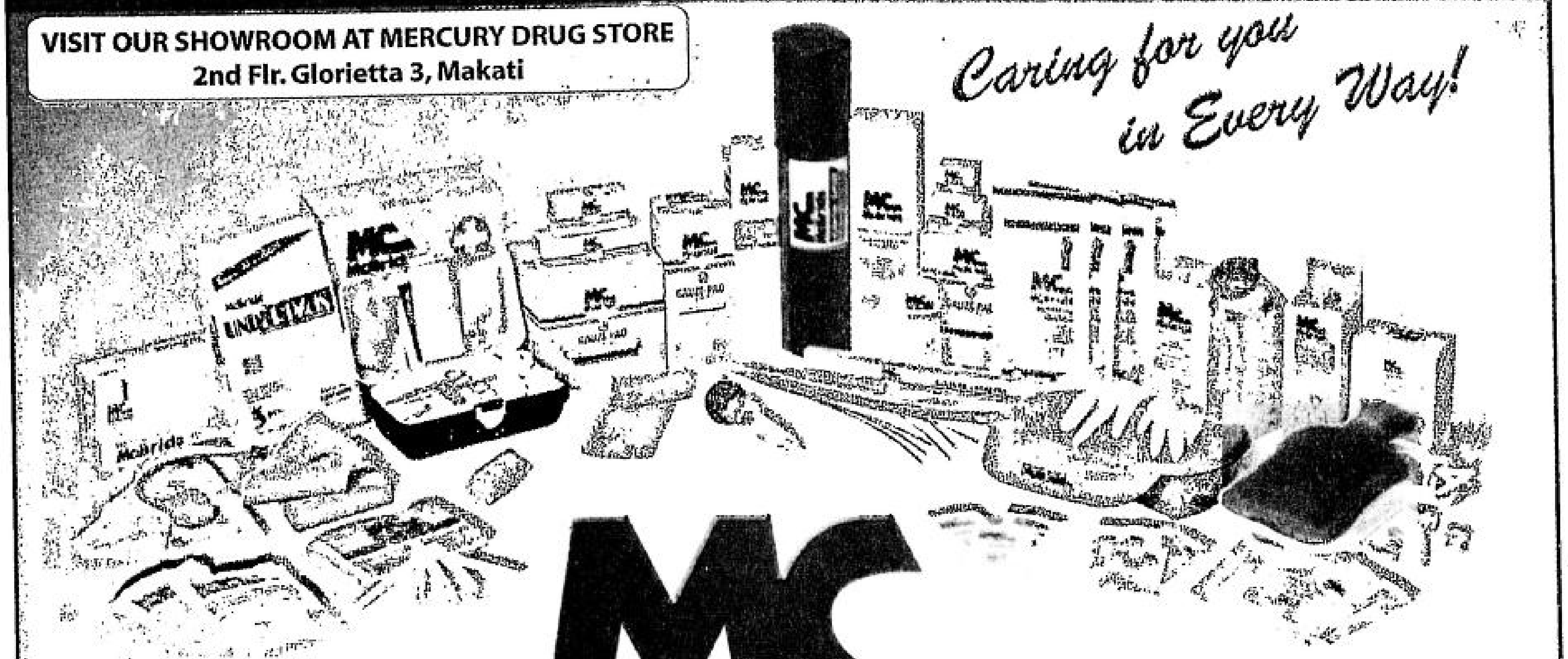

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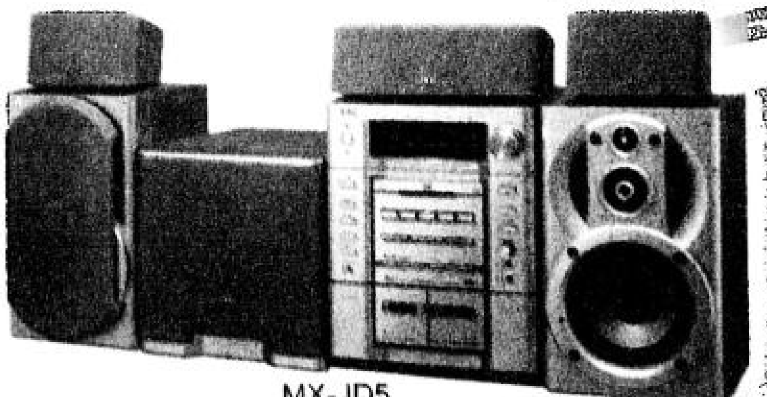

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'All Filipinos were victims'

FOR THE many who were detained or tortured during the Marcos dictatorship, it was like being brutalized all over again.

That much could be gleaned from the reactions of victims of human rights abuses after a US appeals court decision put beyond their reach the $683 million of Marcos-linked assets recovered by the Philippine government from secret bank accounts in Switzerland.

- Lorenzo Listana, 44, of Daraga, Albay, jailed for 6 months in 1983, tortured. Now a businessman: "Our rights as humans were really violated so we should really be compensated. I did not only suffer from my imprisonment. I was also forced to stop going to school.

"My brother, Clemente, who was trying to help some people, was also abducted in 1979 because he was mistakenly identified as an NPA (New People's Army rebel). We haven't seen him since."

- Marie Hilao-Enriquez, 52, imprisoned from 1974 (when she was 21) and held until 1976. Now leader of the human rights group Selda: "The Philippine government must make an accounting of the money for the victims if it is still intact. They deserve to receive their compensation. We demand that the government pay the victims the amount that belongs to them."
- Enriquez's sister, Liliosa Hilao, associate editor of Hasik newsletter, was abducted by the military in April 1973 and killed.
- Ernie Alcala, 54, a senior reporter of dwRM Radyo ng Bayan in Palawan, arrested in 1972 when he was a student, and tortured. He was 22 then: "All Filipinos were victims. If the victims won't get compensation and if the money will go to the government, that's OK, because … all Filipinos were victims."

A 'terrorist' decision

- Mariano Gadiano, one of the student activists arrested with Alcala, was also tortured and died after he was released.
- Farmer Nestor T. Mendoza, 65, of Silang, Cavite, held in various Philippine Constabulary camps as an alleged NPA: He said the US court decision showed how callous the US government was.
- Farmer Cornelio Endoso, 58, also of Silang, detained for four months and tortured: He said the court decision was an insult to him and the Filipino people.
- Fr. Joe Dizon, an activist priest, detained and tortured: "The decision was stupid, ridiculous, terrorist and unjust."

Justice denied

- Reynaldo Jamoralin, 53, of Sorsogon City, imprisoned and tortured in 1972. Now the secretary of the provincial tourism council: "The ruling was grossly unfair. There was already a prior court ruling and it should be carried out."
- Melchor Genavea arrested in 1972. Now an official of the Government Service Insurance System in Sorsogon: "The ruling denied the victims the justice they deserve."

Not end of world

- Lawyer Democrito Barcenas, jailed for three months in 1972 and his movements restricted for five years. Now president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Cebu City chapter: "It does not mean that this is the end of the world for human rights claimants. We hope that the leadership in Congress will take serious efforts in having this (compensation bill) passed because [this] is a matter of justice."

The compensation could serve as a lesson for "budding tyrants," he said.

- Lawyer Kit Enriquez, detained for three years as a member of the Samahan Demokratikong Kabataan: He said "suffering can never be quantified." The Marcoses "sucked the economy dry, they should be made to return it" by compensating the victims and the country.
- Lawyer Elias Guiloreza, detained for a year and 7 months: "[This is] very painful to the victims who have suffered torture and detention." *Reports from Jofelle P. Tesorio, Marlon Ramos, Romulo O. Ponte, Joanna Teressa Los Baños and Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Connie E. Fernandez and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

THE LATE dictator's widow Imelda Marcos speaks to supporters during a gathering at Manila's Rizal Park. RAFFY LERMA

US ruling on Marcos money elates Imelda

From page A1

that could hit the Marcos assets.

Mrs Marcos said she was "almost speechless" on hearing the news about the US appeals court verdict.

"Once again, the United States judicial system worked," she said.

But all is not lost for the victims of human rights abuses. *(See story at left.)*

Malacañang said the victims need not despair because it would prod Congress to pass a pending bill allowing them to get a share of the Marcos bounty, which had been in a government bank.

"We will first push for new tax measures, the budget will come second and we will add the compensation bill because we really need to do this," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in an interview on RMN radio.

"The human rights victims have waited a long time for this."

Bunye also said: "I hope we don't get derailed and that we finish all the economic reforms we have lined up."

It has been more than a decade since the US federal jury in Honolulu awarded $1.2 billion in damages to the victims of torture, summary killings and disappearances during the Marcos regime. With interest, the amount has grown to nearly $4 billion.

In the maze of lawsuits and legal appeals, the victims have not seen a cent of that award to this day.

GMA commitment

Bunye said: "The President has already recognized the need to indemnify the human rights victims. The executive has already done its part in earmarking an amount for them. We only need to have a law passed in Congress."

He recalled that President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the Department of Budget and Management to allocate P8 billion from the proceeds of the Marcos wealth to the claimants.

"We have to amend the CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) Law because according to its original intention, any wealth recovered form the Marcos family would be used for CARP," he said.

Hope lingers

The Supreme Court declared in 2003 that the assets were part of Marcos' alleged ill-gotten and forfeited them to the government.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said there was still hope for the victims to get compensation because Congress was working on a law to indemnify them.

"All is not lost," Arroyo, who sponsored the compensation bill in the Senate, said in a statement.

The measure would allow the plaintiffs in the US class suit, as well as other victims of abuses, to file their claims before a board to be created.

$11 billion

Arroyo, in a phone interview, said the board would evaluate each claim and award monetary benefits "according to the gravity" of the victims' sufferings.

Under the measure, those entitled to file claims are the people who suffered under martial law and died from the period of Sept. 21, 1972 (when martial law was imposed) to Feb. 2, 1986 (when the late Ferdinand Marcos fled the country).

The bill proposed the setting aside of $11 billion for the compensation of the victims.

Romy Capulong, former lawyer of the claimants group Selda, said he was not surprised by the US appeals court decision since he had realized early on "that it would be difficult for a judgment of a foreign court to be enforced here, especially if the one we're contending with is the Philippine government itself, who has received the money."

The victims could now just pin their hopes of monetary redress on the compensation bills pending before Congress, he said.

'Is money still intact?'

He noted that Philippine National Bank had already turned over the Marcos money to the national treasury and that it was now "co-mingled with the general fund."

"It's worth checking if it's still there," Capulong said in an interview.

Party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales (Akbayan), a torture victim herself during the Marcos years, said the Arroyo administration had committed itself to support the compensation bill.

Rosales is chair of the House committee on human rights and is the principal sponsor of House Bill No. 3315, which seeks to provide at least P10 billion for all Marcos victims.

She said that House Majority Leader Rep Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) had pledged to put the bill next in line after Congress had finished the tax measures being sought by Malacañang.

Victory in defeat

"If they can pass tax bills with the speed of an express train, they can do the same for the human rights victims," Rosales said.

A torture victim, Marie Hilao-Enriquez, who leads the rights groups Selda and Karapatan, saw the US court decision as, in effect, a victory.

"There's no longer any obstacle in the way of President Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to compensate the human rights victims of martial law," Enriquez said.

With the ill-gotten assets safely in the hands of the government, Enriquez said the government should now honor the state's "moral obligation to compensate human rights victims … as stated in the Constitution." *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Volt Contreras*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 7, 2005
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 1:1-19
Gospel: Mark 6:53-56

Having crossed the lake, they came ashore at Gennesaret where they tied up the boat. As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus and ran to spread the news throughout the countryside. Wherever he was they brought to him the sick lying on their mats. And wherever he went, to villages, towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak. And all who touched him were cured.

Commentary

Again and again we hear that no matter where Jesus is found, the sick are brought to him and people run with the news of the hope of healing, dignity, acceptance for those ill and the whole community. They beg, for his touch, to touch the fringe of his clothes and they're healed if they get that close. And this is Gennesaret where they had told him to leave before! Obviously they recognize him because the man Jesus told to stay and bring hope by his story and what Jesus had done for him, now bears unbounded fruit in his neighborhood. Now the lake that drowned the pigs, brings Jesus back and wholeness, right living (those in their right mind) now come together—the gift shared. Do we live, when we are healed and forgiven and reaccepted into God's family so that others come to recognize Jesus in our words, our lives changed and our sharing of God's goodness to us with others? This is the only gratitude God wants and that we can actually practice. Help us, O Lord of all life, help us.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Pre-trial—The trial court erred in declaring them as in default for their failure to file a pre-trial brief at least three days before the scheduled pre-trial and to appear before the trial court on said date and time. Under Section 1, Rule 20 of the Rules of Court, the parties and their counsel are mandated to appear before the court for pre-trial and if the defendants fail to do so despite due notice and without any justifiable reason therefor, they may be declared as in default, conformably to Section 2, Rule 20 of the said Rules. The parties are also mandated under Circular No. 1-89 dated January 19, 1989 to file their respective pre-trial briefs at least three days before the pre-trial conference and if the defendants fail to do so, they may be declared as in default. The parties and their counsel must be served with copies of the order of the court setting the case for pre-trial, either by personal delivery or by mail under Sections 3, 4, and 5, Rule 13 of the Rules of Court, or by substituted service under Section 6, Rule 13 of the Rules of Court. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Peña vs Court of Appeals, G. R. No. 126275, November 11, 2004] BY R. B. VERA

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Sunnis demand timetable for US pullout

BAGHDAD—A week after Iraq's historic elections, leading Sunni clerics demanded a troop withdrawal timetable to rejoin the political arena as insurgents kept up their attacks.

Extremist Sunni Arab groups kept up their bloody campaign, killing at least 25 Iraqis and a US marine in a new wave of strikes. Scores have now been killed since the country's landmark election on Jan. 30 which is expected to see the majority Shiite community reclaim power.

Iraqi authorities and the US military also stepped up the hunt for abducted Italian reporter Giuliana Sgrena, who was seized near a Baghdad mosque on Friday.

One group, which said it had Sgrena, gave Italy until Monday to withdraw its troops from Iraq, but Italians expressed doubts about the credibility of the claim.

The militant Ansar al-Sunna group, which is linked to al-Qaida, said Saturday that it had executed seven Iraqi soldiers who were taken following an ambush west of Baghdad.

In a statement posted on its website, the group said "the divine rule executed seven miscreants taken prisoner in violent combat with the valiant mujahideen in the Abu Ghraib region."

Iraqi security forces have borne the brunt of attacks over the past week. Four soldiers were killed by a booby-trapped motorcycle in the southern Shiite-dominated city of Basra.

A tribal leader was killed near the restive Sunni city of Ramadi.

The Committee of Muslim Scholars, Iraq's leading Sunni religious authority, said Saturday that if a timetable for foreign troops to leave was announced it would urge insurgents to end the country's bloodshed.

Following talks with UN special envoy Ashraf Qazi, the influential grouping of clerics explained a timetable was a condition for its participation in the post-electoral constitution-drafting process.

"We told him (Qazi) that we had conditions and that we would discuss them with the parties that boycotted the polls and would put forward a common stance," said spokesperson Omar Ragheb.

"These demands focus on reaching a consensus with all political parties on a withdrawal of foreign forces," he added. "Then, the country's elders will tell the resistance: 'No need to spill more blood'."

Many observers believe the constitution, which the new national assembly must draw up, will only command nationwide respect if the Sunni Arab elite that dominated previous governments, is drawn into the process.

Italy has been rocked by the abduction of 56-year-old Sgrena, Middle East correspondent for the leftist Il Manifesto.

She was snatched after visiting a mosque where refugees have been encamped since the devastating US-led assault on Fallujah in November. The area has become a notorious danger zone for journalists.

French reporter Florence Aubenas disappeared one month ago as she worked on the same story, while another Western reporter escaped a kidnap attempt in the same area 10 days ago. *AFP*

Swank, Foxx, 'Sideways' grab top US awards

LOS ANGELES—Actors Hilary Swank and Jamie Foxx, plus the offbeat comedy "Sideways," were big winners at the US Screen Actors Guild awards, which are considered an important signpost for the Oscars later this month.

At a ceremony on Saturday "Sideways," a comedy about two middle-aged friends touring the vineyards of California, was voted outstanding cast performance for the work of its four leading actors, Paul Giamatti, Thomas Haden Church, Sandra Oh and Virginia Madsen.

The film, directed by Alexander Payne, is one of five nominated for best picture Oscar, along with "The Aviator" and "Million Dollar Baby."

The SAG ensemble award is considered the equivalent of the top Oscar prize, which is due to be unveiled by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles on Feb. 27.

The winner of the SAG ensemble award has gone on to garner best picture Oscar in four of the nine years in which the Screen Actors Guild has awarded prizes in this category.

Actress Hilary Swank was awarded best actress for her role in "Million Dollar Baby," directed by Clint Eastwood, in which she portrays a woman who decides to become a professional boxer.

Oscar prospects are looking bright for the willowy young actress, who also took home the best actress in a drama award at the Golden Globes Awards on Jan. 16.

As in 2000, when she won an Oscar for "Boys Don't Cry," Swank faces stiff competition from a more senior actress, Annette Bening, who is in the running for her starring role in "Being Julia." Bening was nominated for an Oscar in 2000 for "American Beauty." Actor Jamie Foxx won best actor Saturday for his portrayal of the recently deceased musician Ray Charles, in the film "Ray." Experts say Foxx is a shoo-in for an Oscar, after he picked up the analogous award at the Golden Globes.

"The Aviator," which has 11 Oscar nominations including best picture, best director for Martin Scorsese, and best actor for Leonardo di Caprio, barely got onstage Saturday, winning only best supporting actress for Cate Blanchett for her portrayal of Katharine Hepburn.

Veteran actor Morgan Freeman won best supporting actor for his role in "Million Dollar Baby." *AFP*

Rescuers struggle to reach Afghan plane wreckage

KABUL—Nato-led troops struggled on Sunday to reach the icy crash site of an Afghan passenger plane that slammed into a mountain peak three days ago with 104 people on board, an official said.

All on board are feared to have died on the 3,300 meter mountain that is blanketed in thick snow after days of bad weather.

Scores of troops had reached the mountain above the village of Band-e Ghazi where Nato helicopter pilots had earlier spotted the tail of the Boeing 737 and other debris strewn across the peak southeast of Kabul, the capital, a Nato spokesperson said.

"Ground troops are still trying and working to reach the crash site," Maj. Karen Tissot Van Patot said.

Bad weather and heavy snow were hampering rescue efforts, she said.

Most of the passengers were Afghans but also on board were nine Turks, four Americans, one Italian navy officer, two other Italian nationals, an Iranian and the eight crew, four of them Russians.

The plane, operated by private Afghan airline Kam Air, had been flying to Kabul on Thursday from the western city of Herat, a busy route for Afghan businessmen and foreign aid workers returning to the capital.

But a snow storm prevented the plane from landing and it disappeared off radar screens three minutes later.

Kabul airport is on a high plain surrounded by mountains forcing pilots to do a sharp turn immediately before landing even in good conditions. It also lacks electronic equipment to guide pilots trying to land in bad weather. *Reuters*

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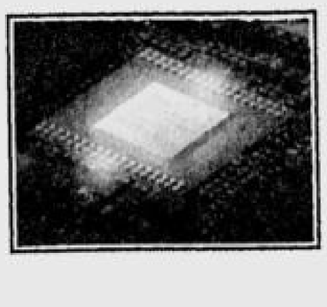

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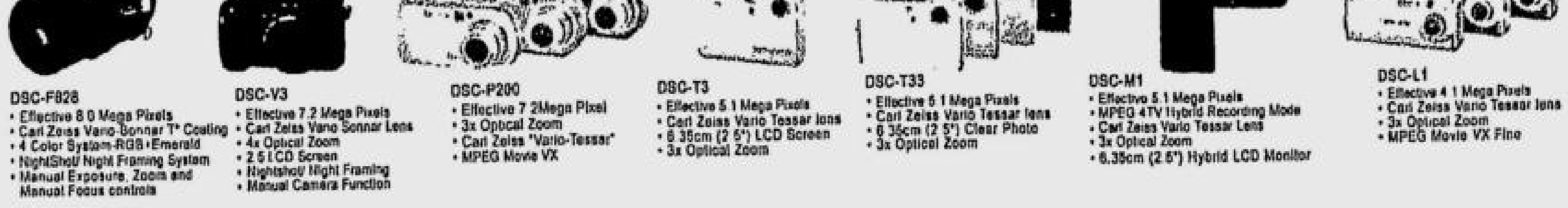

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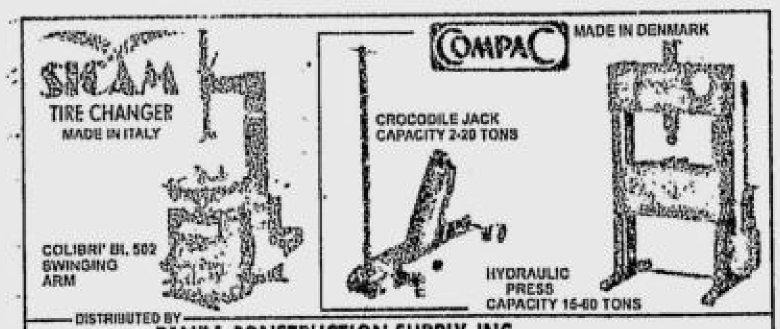
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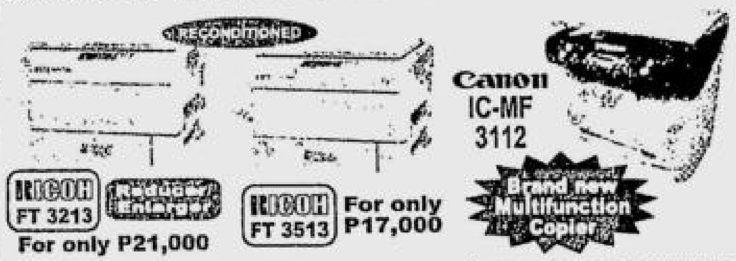

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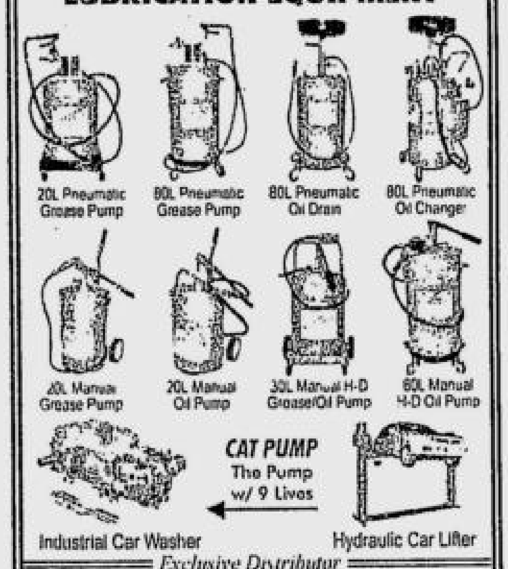
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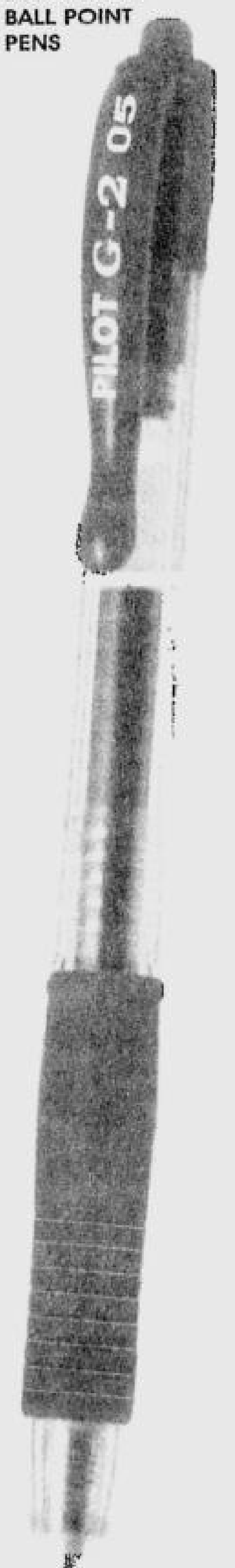

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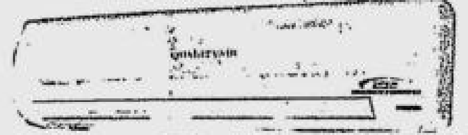

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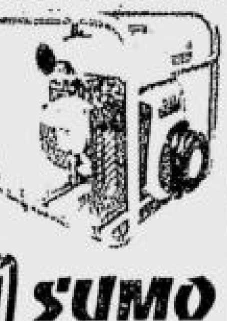

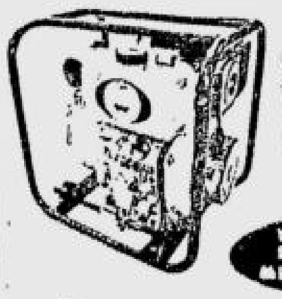

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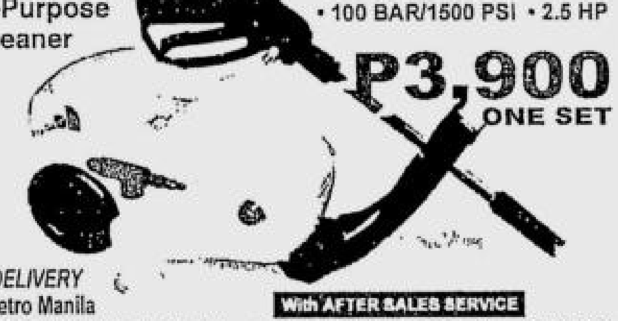

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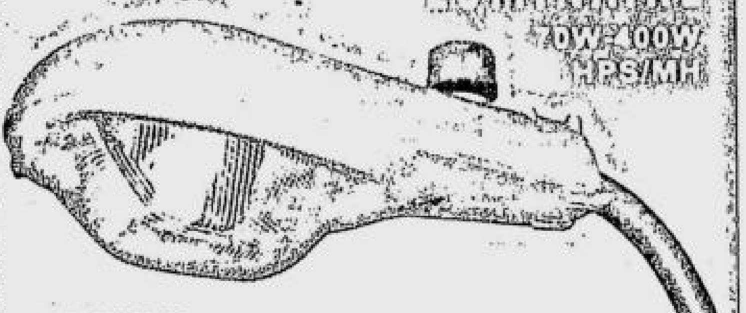

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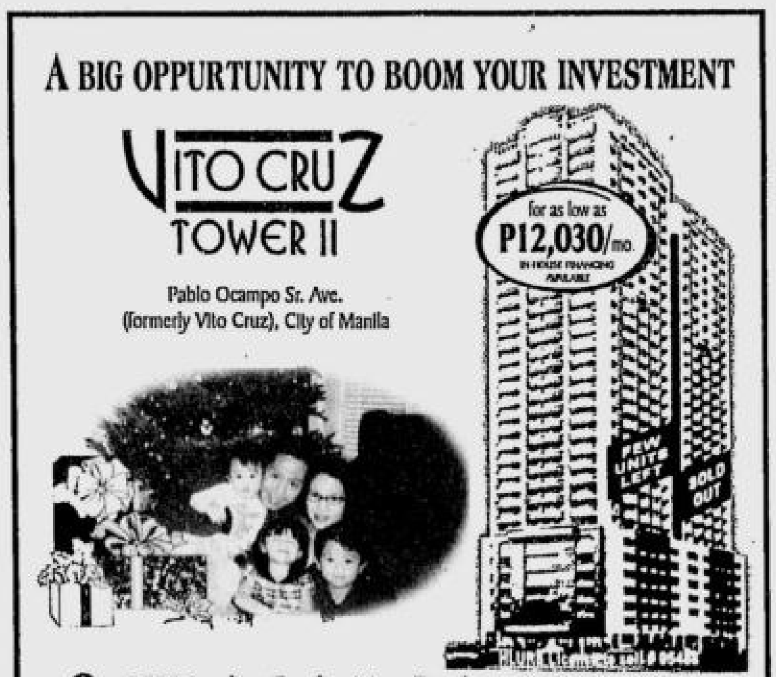

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Pope vows to pursue mission despite health crisis

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II, determined to show he is recovering from his latest health crisis, appeared in an open hospital window Sunday and vowed to continue his mission despite his age and mounting medical troubles.

It was the world's first public glimpse of John Paul since his hospitalization.

In a message read out by an archbishop, the 84-year-old Pope—looking rested and alert—gave thanks for the prayers and affection he has received since he was rushed to Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic last Tuesday with breathing trouble brought on by the flu.

On St. Peter's Square, where several thousand pilgrims and Romans gathered to see the Pope on four giant video screens, cheers went up as his image filled the screens.

"Also in this hospital, in the middle of other sick people to whom my affectionate thoughts go out, I can continue to serve the church and the entire humanity," the Pope said.

"Today I speak to you from the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic where I have been for a few days, being helped with loving care by doctors, nurses and health workers whom I thank from my heart," he said.

THE HANDS of a nun from the charity St. Vincent De Paul are clasped in a prayer for the health of Pope John Paul II at the holy shrine in Knock, Republic of Ireland, Feb. 5. AP

"May the expression of my gratitude for the sincere and heartfelt affection reach all of you, dear brothers and sisters, and to all those in every part of the world who are close to me, something which during these days I felt in a particularly intense way," he said.

Police tightened security around the hospital, posting snipers on the roof over the Pope's 10th-floor suite as officers checked trash bins and patrolled with bomb-sniffing dogs.

Hospital workers watched with teary eyes as the Pope sat quietly while he message was read, then gave his blessing and thanked those who had prayed for his recovery.

The Pope's message also spoke out anew against abortion—urging people to "trust in the life that children who are not yet born silently cry out for."

"So many children, who are without families for various reasons, are asking for trust so that they can find a house that will accept them through adoption and temporary care," the Pope said.

"To all and each of you I assure you of my gratitude, which is translated into a constant invocation of the Lord according to your intentions as also for the needs of the church and the great issues of the world," he said. *AP*

More seafarers killed in pirate attacks in 2004

KUALA LUMPUR—The number of seafarers killed by pirates surged last year, even though the overall incidence of armed robbery on the high seas fell, an international watchdog said in its annual report out Monday.

Thirty mariners were killed in attacks, mainly in Nigeria and in the busy Malacca Strait separating Indonesia from Malaysia, the Piracy Reporting Center of the International Maritime Bureau said.

The figure represented a significant rise on 2003, when 21 seafarers were killed.

Nigeria had the most deadly waters, with 15 seafarers killed while four people were killed in the Malacca Strait, the Malaysian-based center said.

Worldwide actual or attempted piracy attacks declined to 325 from 445 in 2003, but violence against seafarers "continues and remains at high levels," the report said.

"Although the decline in the number of attacks is to be welcomed, there is concern that in some key hot spots the situation has deteriorated," said Capt. Pottengal Mukundan, director of the International Maritime Bureau.

The center said hijackings of tugs and barges and kidnapping of crews continued to increase in Indonesian waters, in the northern Malacca Strait and off North Sumatra. *AFP*

Rooster year seen not as disastrous as Monkey

By Helen Luk

HONG KONG—The Year of the Rooster begins this week and Chinese fortune tellers predict it won't be as disastrous as the past Year of the Monkey but some are bracing for more epidemics, earthquakes and sex scandals.

"The year in general won't be as turbulent and horrible as 2004," said Raymond Lo, a Hong Kong master of feng shui, the ancient art of boosting your fortune by finding the proper position for things.

"In general, it's more peace talks, more compromises and more negotiations. In the Middle East, we look forward to a more peaceful time," Lo said.

He noted that Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler died and World War II ended in the Rooster year of 1945.

The start of the Year of the Rooster will be celebrated Wednesday by ethnic Chinese—about one-fifth of the world's population. The holiday on the Lunar New Year calendar is as festive in the Chinese-speaking world as Christmas is in many Western countries.

Peter So, a famous Hong Kong feng shui master whose clients include pop diva Faye Wong and former Bond girl Michelle Yeoh, said that "2005 is less problematic but it is still a year of earthquakes."

Some of the biggest quakes happened during Rooster years, including a 9.1-magnitude temblor that jolted Alaska in 1957, triggering a volcanic eruption.

In the same year, a global influenza pandemic killed more than a million people.

Tay Thong, a feng shui expert in Singapore, predicted an ongoing conflict in North and South Korea and said the southwest part of Iraq will pose a problem for the country.

Osama bin Laden—born under the sign of the Rooster—will continue to elude capture, but he's more vulnerable to bad fortune in the year of his own astrological sign, Lo said.

"We expect some victories against terrorism in 2005," he said.

Last year, soothsayers accurately predicted that Americans would reelect President George W. Bush, but they also told The Associated Press that Bin Laden would surrender.

It was the general opinion that the Year of the Monkey would be a time of tumult. Indeed it was. Violence continued in Iraq, a terrorist train bombing killed 191 in Madrid, Spain, and a giant tsunami killed tens of thousands in 11 nations across the Indian Ocean.

Soothsayers say the Year of the Rooster will be a good time for stock and property markets—and the world economy in general.

Malaysian feng shui consultant Geraldine Tay predicted a busy year for the corporate sector, saying industries related to wood, metal and earth—such as paper, timber and oil palm businesses—would enjoy a boost.

Some business leaders might be so busy that they won't have time to "go home and eat," said Tay, who heads the Institute of Tao Studies in Kuala Lumpur.

The year will also bode well for glamorous industries, such as show biz, advertising and cosmetics.

"The rooster symbolizes the element of gold, which represents skin and appearances," Lo said.

Famous celebrity roosters include Hollywood stars Jennifer Aniston, Katharine Hepburn and Michelle Pfeiffer, the late Jamaican reggae singer Bob Marley, British songwriter Eric Clapton, American rock star Van Morrison and the late Nobel prize-winning author William Faulkner.

But Lo warned of a proliferation of marital problems, love affairs and sex scandals, especially for couples who have clashing signs, such as rabbit and rooster. *AP*

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Togo President Eyadema dies of heart attack

EYADEMA AFP

LOME, Togo—Togo President Gnassingbe Eyadema, whose 38-year repressive reign over his tiny, impoverished country made him Africa's longest-ruling leader, died of what aides said was a heart attack Saturday, and the military immediately named his son as his successor.

Worldwide, only Cuba's Fidel Castro has held power longer.

Eyadema, 69, who claimed sole control in 1967 after aiding in what was sub-Saharan Africa's first post-colonial coup four years earlier, suffered a heart attack in his southeastern hometown of Piya early Saturday, officials said.

Togo said Eyadema died on his way to Europe for treatment, but Israel's Foreign Ministry said the Togolese leader actually had been on his way to that country, where Israel said he had received medical care before.

Within hours, Togo's military high command declared Eyadema's 39-year-old son, Faure Gnassingbe, was the West African nation's new president.

While the constitution calls for that power to go to the speaker of parliament, Togo's military said the lawmaker was out of the country and that it acted to avoid a "total vacuum of power."

State television showed military leaders, including army chief of defense staff Gen. Zakari Nandja, swearing allegiance to the late leader's son, who was the minister of mines and communications. *AP*

G7 opens door to full debt relief

LONDON—The Group of Seven has opened the door for unprecedented 100-percent multilateral debt relief for the world's poorest countries but charities and experts are doubtful that such a move will see the light of day.

Finance chiefs from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States broke new ground here Saturday as they for the first time expressed readiness in a formal statement to provide 100-percent debt relief for the world's poorest nations.

The pledge came at the end of a two-day meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bankers during which a US-Europe rift threatened to torpedo a British-led initiative to tackle global poverty, dubbed a modern day Marshall Plan.

"G7 finance ministers have buried their differences and agreed to move together on debt, aid and trade," said Max Lawson, senior policy adviser for the charity Oxfam.

"They've passed the first hurdle of 2005, but they need to move quickly to turn their proposals into real change for the world's poorest.

"Two million children will die needlessly between now and the next meeting in April. If rich countries are going to keep their promises to tackle obscene poverty they need deliver—and deliver quickly," he added.

A statement Saturday said G7 countries had "agreed on a case-by-case analysis of HIPC countries, based on our willingness to provide as much as 100 percent multilateral debt relief."

The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) is a joint project of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that offers debt relief to the world's most impoverished nations that agree to undertake economic reform.

"This is the first time as much as 100-percent debt relief has ever been detailed in a G7 communique," Brown, whose government holds the current presidencies of the G7 and G8, told reporters at the meeting's conclusion.

But Britain's finance minister failed to win US approval for his ambitious scheme to provide debt relief and trade benefits to poor nations modelled on former US secretary of state George Marshall's grand project to restore the European economy from the devastation of World War II.

"The US is committed to poverty reduction for heavily indebted countries but we cannot support the IFF," US Undersecretary of the Treasury John Taylor told a news conference Saturday. *AFP*

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What is Meningococcemia?

Meningococcemia is a disease caused by the spread of the bacteria Neisseria meningitides through the bloodstream, causing severe signs and symptoms. The most deadly form of meningococcal infection is fulminant meningococcemia, which consists of fever, rash, and low blood pressure, leading to death.

What are the signs and symptoms of Meningococcemia?

The signs and symptoms are rapidly progressive, includes fever, chills, body weakness, cough, and sore throat. There is also a rash which may start as pinpoint reddish lesions on the legs and arms, later becoming larger and appearing like bruises. The patient may or may not have signs of meningitis such as stiff neck, convulsion, delirium, and vomiting.

How does meningococcal disease spread? How soon after exposure to the bacteria does one develop the signs and symptoms?

Although meningococcal bacteria are common, they do not survive for long periods outside the body. The bacteria spreads by droplet infection, direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat of an infected person, through close physical contact like coughing, sneezing, kissing, and sharing anything that has been inside an infected person's mouth (such as toothbrushes, cups, utensils, and drinking straws).

It takes between 1-10 days (usually less than 4 days) from exposure to development of the signs and symptoms.

Who is considered a close contact?

A close contact is someone who has had direct contact with saliva or secretions from the nose or throat of an infected person. These include household members or those who share a bed, those who share eating and drinking utensils, and those who have kissed the infected person. Children in the same childcare center or nursery frequently put objects into their mouths and can be considered close contacts.

What can be done to protect close contacts?

Those who are close contacts of the infected person may continue to attend school or work. However, they should receive antibiotics prescribed by their physician for their own protection.

Can meningococcemia be prevented?

In general, it is wise to avoid using anything that has been in the mouth of another person. Hygiene measures such as handwashing and maintaining a clean, well-ventillated environment, as well as adequate rest and nutrition, will improve resistance.

A vaccine is available which protects against some forms of the bacteria and may thus provide a certain degree of protection. It is usually given to persons who are at high risk of developing the disease. Your doctor should be able to advice you regarding this vaccine.

Can meningococcemia and meningitis be treated?

Early recognition of meningococcal infection and prompt treatment with penicillin G as well as supportive management greatly improves chances of survival.

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
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Publisher **ISAGANI YAMBOT**
Editor in Chief **LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC**
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Precondition to peace

EDITORIAL

THE PEACE talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front resume in Kuala Lumpur this month. Because three armed encounters last month cast a pall over the already protracted peace process, the simple announcement that the next round will push through on schedule is cause for real, albeit cautious, optimism.

Last month, a group of renegade MILF rebels attacked an army outpost in Mamasapano, Maguindanao, killing seven soldiers. And in pursuit of Indonesian members of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group allegedly harbored by another MILF command, the Armed Forces' 6th Infantry Division launched two military strikes in three towns in Maguindanao. The AFP has claimed killing 40 armed men, including three of the Indonesians.

Both supporters and critics of the peace process have sounded the alarm over the encounters, fearing that they spell danger ahead. And Bantay Ceasefire, a multi-sectoral group of peace advocates, warned that the continuing pursuit of JI members was jeopardizing the 18-month-old ceasefire itself. The group also appealed to the MILF to impose appropriate measures on the renegades, particularly its Commander Wahid.

Perhaps, self-consciously, the peace group sought to strike a balance, apportioning equal blame to the AFP and the MILF. If this is so, it is a stance we can easily understand. The group does not want to be perceived as favoring one side or the other.

But in this particular case, the equivalence of responsibility is in fact a false one. MILF renegades are a bigger threat to the peace negotiations than the military's continuing anti-terrorist operations.

Let us be clear: The status of "lost commands" in the MILF is a real obstacle to peace. They make arduous negotiations even more difficult. And they raise the question of whether any agreement reached during these negotiations can in fact be enforced.

On the other hand, neither the MILF nor any third party can seriously suggest that the government put its counter-terrorism campaign on hold. Jemaah Islamiyah, the al-Qaida-affiliated network seeking to establish a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia, is a dangerous threat to national security. And unlike the Moro rebellion, the solution to the JI problem is not and cannot be a matter of negotiation.

To be sure, Bantay Ceasefire's argument against the continuing JI "manhunt" revolves around the question of collateral damage on the civilian population. "Bantay Ceasefire appeals to the Armed Forces to strictly follow the guidelines of their Commander in Chief, [which are] meant to lower the impact of military operations on civilians," the group's statement last week read. They have a point; to the extent that it can, the military must warn civilians in a battle zone ahead of an operation, or move areas of operation away from centers of population. But like the proverbial guerrilla swimming in a sea of people, terrorists also seek cover by blending in.

The AFP believes that some members of the MILF continue to give refuge to JI partisans. If belief is reflected in reality, then these MILF members must bear joint responsibility for any collateral damage a counter-terrorism strike may inflict on civilians.

But "some members?" "These members?" The language reminds us that the monster of renegade rebels has once again reared its head. Since the death of its founder, the MILF has had to struggle with the issue of the so-called lost commands. Their emergence has legitimized concerns about control—or the lack of it—over the MILF's 12,000 regulars. The MILF must resolve this issue once and for all.

Strong will

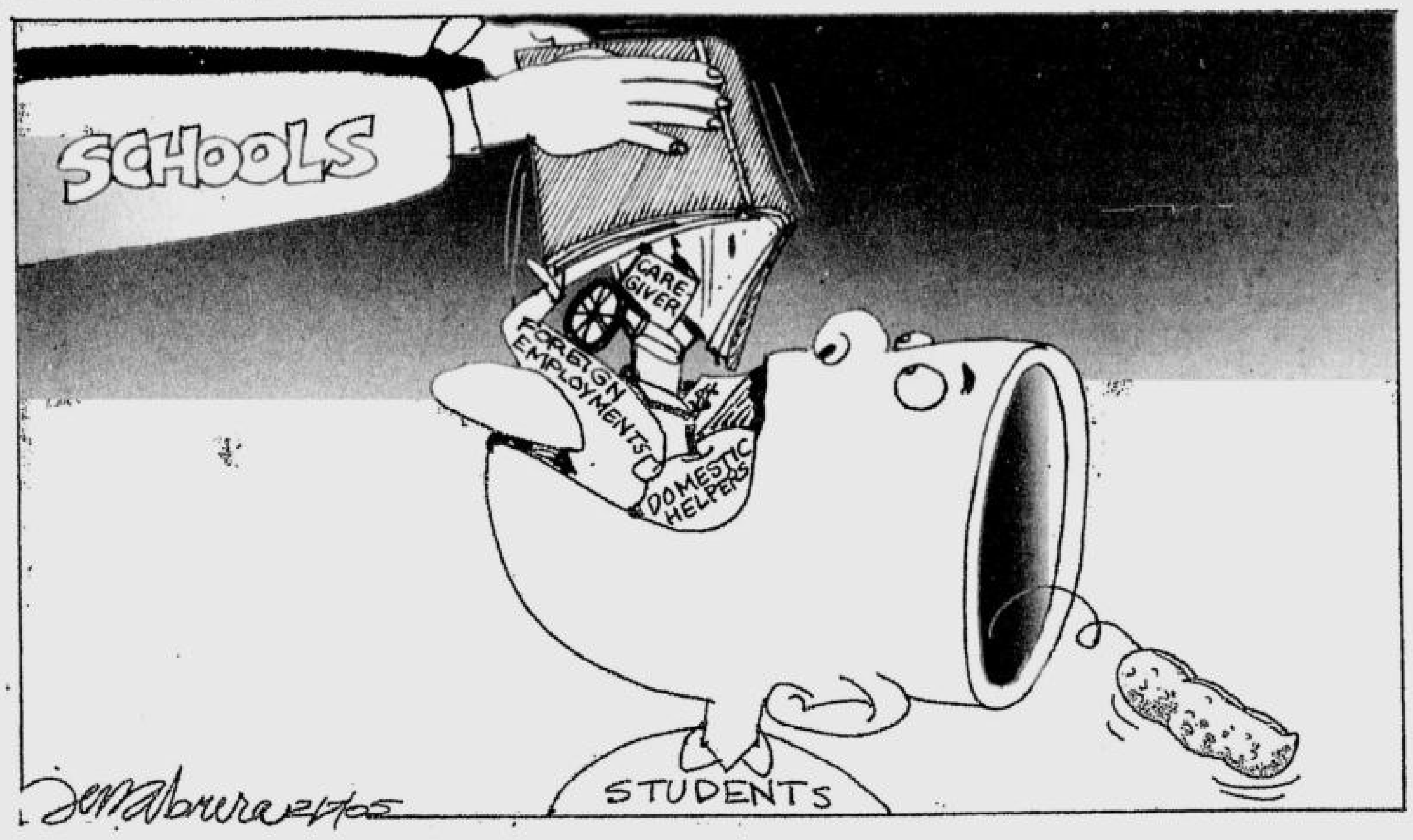
FOREIGN COMMENT

UPON HEARING an explosion, a middle-aged man in Baghdad headed for a polling station, saying, "I will challenge the criminals." In Mosul, a Sunni leader went to a polling station earlier than anybody else, declaring that casting a ballot was a citizen's duty, thus moving his fellow citizens to action.

News media sent reports to the world about the eagerness of the Iraqi people to build a new nation with their own hands in the face of fierce violence by insurgents. According to an estimate, voter turnout reached approximately 60 percent. Arab TV stations reported on the enthusiasm of voters.

The Asahi Shimbun has criticized the Iraq war. But we have wished the Iraqis great success in the election. We admire the strong will of the Iraqis for standing on their own feet. The question now is how to harness such a will to build a stable nation.

Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo, Japan)



Misleading the public with statistics

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THERE are a number of reasons why the people no longer trust this administration. Among them: the administration has not been forthright with information and has in fact been caught many times deliberately confusing and even misinforming the people.

For example, the government recently patted itself on the back for the gain in the exchange rate of the peso against the US dollar, making people believe that this is due to a stronger economy, the result of the measures that the administration has adopted. False.

The peso has indeed gained against the dollar in the exchange rate, but this is not because the peso has become stronger but because the dollar has become weaker. All the currencies in Asia, as well as the Euro, have appreciated in value against the dollar. Of these, the Philippine peso gained the least. While the other currencies have double-digit increases, the peso went up by a measly 3 percent. The Indonesian currency increased by 49 percent, the Euro by 59 percent, and the other currencies by a little less. In effect, the peso even lost in relation to other currencies.

But all these the Arroyo administration hid from the people, praising itself, instead, for the peso's gain on the dollar. How can you trust an administration on such an important matter?

Another example is the alleged 6.1 percent increase in the gross domestic product (GDP). Again, the administration praised itself for this alleged "feat."

But what do we really have? Only numbers on pieces of paper. Do these numbers lay more food on the tables of the poor? Does the alleged growth in GDP create more job opportunities for more people? What good is "growth" if it does not improve the people's standard of living, too?

Even assuming the statistics are correct (the Philippine government has already been caught fudging statistics in the past), the growth in GDP (this is the totality of the goods and services produced in the country) is only among the rich, but not among the poor. The growth is in the business sector—such as the telecommunications and transportation sectors that are non-productive—but not in the productive sector such as agriculture. This alleged "growth" has not benefited the common man. There has been no trickle-down effect. In other words, the rich are getting richer but the poor are getting poorer.

But the government did not impart this information to the people. It just said that the GDP has grown, as though the information would make the people feel less hungry.

Another area where the government is misleading the people is in the employment/unemployment rate. According to statistics foisted by the administration, the unemployment rate is going down. But the government is cheating in counting those who are employed and those who are not.

It categorized a person who was able to work for a few days as "employed," even if he was jobless for 360 days of the year. And it considered only those who are looking for jobs but could not find any as "unemployed." If you are not looking for a job because you have given up or have no more money for transportation, you are not included in the "unemployed" list, even if you have been jobless for the last several years.

This is how the government has increased the employment rate and reduced the hordes of jobless people. But the people do not know this hocus pocus in statistics because their government is not telling them the whole truth.

Another area where the government is deliberately misleading the people is in the value added tax (VAT). Government propagandists assure the people that basic commodities, such as rice, fish, vegetables, cooking oil, will be exempt from the VAT. But if you cook rice and vegetables or buy sardines in cans, you actually also pay VAT on them. Besides, transportation is "VATable," so anything that is transported, such as rice and fish, gets to be covered in a way by the VAT. In short, there is nothing you can eat that is not subject to VAT. So the propaganda that basic commodities are VAT-exempt is a lie.

What are really VAT-exempt are travel expenses, cosmetic surgery (breast implants, liposuction, facelifts in ordinary lingo), jewelry, among others. All these are expenses incurred by the rich, usually only to inflate their ego, to make the beautiful people even more beautiful. These unnecessary, luxurious and frivolous expenses are exempt from the VAT but the food that the poor need to keep themselves alive are not.

One reason the people are so vehemently opposed to the VAT is that the government is not showing any signs that it is cutting costs, plugging the leakages in tax collection and taxing those who can afford to pay the most. The government only wants to tax and tax.

The government propaganda to push the VAT is that it needs the tax money to balance the budget and pay for our debts. We either have to sacrifice now or we face a worse future, so goes the threat. But at the same time that it wants to squeeze the poor taxpayers of more taxes, it is not doing anything to reduce its expenses. Reducing all government allowances—intelligence, confidential, representational, travel, transportation, etc.—just by 10 percent can save enough money that already approximates the additional collection to be derived from a higher VAT.

The congressional pork barrel is clearly and admittedly a waste of tax funds and a source of corruption. Legally and morally it should be abolished, but there is no sign that the Arroyo administration will even reduce it, much less abolish it.

Shut up, shut up

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DIDAGEN Dilangalen, current spokesperson of Joseph Estrada, had an interesting letter last Wednesday. (PDI, 2/2/05)

"Being one of those who speak with President Estrada on a regular basis," he says, "I can assure Conrado de Quiros that the former is in full control of his mental faculties when he states that he is ready to take up the cudgels for our countrymen who have lost hope in a better future under the current administration." Unfortunately, he says, too many Filipinos, including me, "blindly believe whatever the elite and the vested interest groups say about (Erap) or his administration."

There is no truth, he says, to what I said in a column that Edsa 1 and 2 were sparked by the people rising to end a tyranny. Erap, he says, was no tyrant. "(Erap) won the presidential elections with the widest margin ever recorded in Philippine electoral history…Contrary to De Quiros' claims, it was not the sovereign will of the people that led to President Estrada's ouster, but the will of the few who could not bear the thought of a President attending to the needs of the many above the caprices of a powerful few."

All the sins attributed to the Erap government, he says, riot even more in the GMA administration. Illegal gambling is everywhere, and the country currently ranks among the most corrupt in the world. "De Quiros should think about doing his share in stopping this hypocrisy."

What can I say? Dilangalen must have been limiting his reading fare lately to other columnists, which is why his literary skills still need polishing. I can assure him that his failure to read me on a consistent basis is his loss, not mine. But if he had taken to improving his mind by reading me, he would have known—as my enemies do, gnashing their teeth and sending not very veiled threats my way—that I have been doing more than my share in trying to "stop the hypocrisy."

I have no problem with his premise: I will go farther and say that no government has plunged decency to an all-time low since Marcos than the current one. But I have a problem with his solution. As I've also said in previous columns, the way out of the GMA rut is not to go back to the Erap farce. The way out of this pass is to go forward, not backward.

It's time he gave the "*Erap para sa mahirap*" line a break. That line has been discredited long ago. There was little in Erap's rule that resonated with the *masa*, there was everything in it that reeked of elite. Or the worst form of elite, which was crony. You could not find a bigger crony then than Lucio Tan, who had government at his beck and call and who indeed conscripted Erap to mug labor—that is the *masa*, my dear Dilangalen—with an onerous 10-year cessation of collective bargaining. Fortunately, the PAL unions, Fasap chief of them, refused to buckle under.

As tyranny goes, if I recall right, the outcry against Erap jumped to another level, or took on a more strident note, with an act of tyranny in a committee convened to hear Chavit Singson's charges against Erap. A congressman prevented Singson from talking by repeatedly shouting—well, it wasn't "Shut up! Shut up!"—"Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!" The gagging of Singson produced the opposite effect, which was to make his voice roar. The congressman's name was Didagen Dilangalen.

It's true Erap won by the biggest electoral margin any president has had. But it's just as true that he lost the trust of the very people who voted for him. Dilangalen forgets the one thing that made Edsa 2 a popular revolt and not just an elite one. That was the impeachment trial, which gripped the public imagination to a point that it completely shoved aside the most popular *telenovelas* of the time. The TV sets in sidewalk eateries featured the impeachment trial, and restaurants and bars loudly asked patrons to watch the trial in the "big screen" and in air-conditioned luxury, much as they did the PBA games.

The trial, not unlike the *telenovelas*, was a morality play, a drama between good and evil, between the underworld bullies and the heroic underdogs, given a face by the "men in black," the *de-campanilla* lawyers in suits, arrayed in defense of Erap on one side, and on the other, the often inarticulate congressmen who had forgotten their lawyerly skills but who fought on, armed only with truth and courage. Guess whom the *masa* sided with.

If there is any valuable lesson in fact to be gotten from Edsa 1 and 2, it is simply this: No popular support, no Edsa.

To this day, I cannot understand why anyone would imagine it is the easiest thing in the world to mount an Edsa. The worry that we would be making a travesty of Edsa by having a 3 or 4 or 5 is simply unfounded. "People power" does not happen by chance, or by caprice or fiat. It happens at the end of a long process of the *masa* being goaded into action by a detestation of what is and a hope of what can be. The reason the opposition hasn't been able to mount one—though it has been desperately trying to—is not that it cannot get the elite to join them. It is that it cannot get the *masa* to do so.

For reasons that are patent. The opposition has no credibility. The problem precisely lies in the fact that though most Filipinos are deeply disgusted with the current government, as borne out by all the surveys, they are not able to find an alternative to it. That alternative is not, and cannot be, a return to the very thing the people—yes, the *masa* chief of them—rejected as anathema to them. The only way to go is forward, not backward.

Just one last thing: Dilangalen says he can assure me Erap is in full control of his mental faculties. Ah, but he presumes he is in the best position to know when someone is.

Cultural insights

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EARLIER, I had written about the sorry state of Philippine education as revealed by Education Secretary Florencio Abad, and what the government is doing about it with the help of the private sector. He stressed that only 87 out of every 100 Filipinos qualified for school are in school, despite basic education being free and compulsory; of the 87, only 67 manage to graduate from elementary, while only half get to graduate from high school.

Abad's interview elicited a letter from Fr. Pierre Tritz, president of Erda Foundation. The priest notes that while the dropout statistics had improved somewhat, the fact remains that "33 percent of our elementary school-age kids remain illiterate and consequently unable to reach a decent human life."

* * *

Fr. Tritz says he first came across the alarming dropout problem in 1965, in the first journal of Philippine Guidance & Personal Association. He confesses to a "psychological shock" he never forgot. At that time he was working full time at the Araneta Institute of Agriculture (later Araneta University), founded by Don Salvador Araneta. After finishing his master's degree at the Ateneo University, he moved over to the Ateneo Graduate School to teach. But the dropout statistics burned in his mind and he resolved to do something about it. One day, he and a young volunteer in his guidance office, Elizabeth Reyes, went to a public elementary school in Sampaloc, Manila and convinced the authorities there to furnish them the addresses of the kids who had dropped out. After visits to the kids and with records from the Department of Education, Tritz quickly saw the cause of the dropout—poverty. He started his "Balik Paaralan" project, incorporating this in 1974 as Erda Foundation. Today Erda supports 28,534 students in various levels—the bulk of them in elementary—with school books and materials, uniforms and transportation allowances.

* * *

Secretary Abad noted to us that one reason for the poor performance of our public elementary kids is their lack of pre-school preparation; unlike in the more advance countries and the children of affluent families here, our poor kids don't get to attend pre-school. Fr. Tritz says the same thing. As he wrote me, "in addition to poverty, there was also another factor we discovered, namely, the lack of possibility of the poor to enroll in private kindergarten or pre-schools. There were no free government pre-schools." This prompted him to put up, in addition to his "Balik Paaralan" project, free kindergarten classes—for the children of the poor to have an equal chance to successfully enter and persevere in public elementary schools.

This year Erda runs 250 pre-schools with 6,675 enrollees. An Erda pre-school costs about P32,000 a year to operate. This could be a good project for some of our civic clubs or kindhearted citizens to adopt. Call Fr. Tritz at 732-4327 or 732-3198.

* * *

Our Tokyo-based daughter, Christine, is married to Keiichi Miki, an investment banker, who heads JP Morgan Chase in Tokyo. Over the holidays, they were here to join up with our clan and to escape from the cold in Japan. Keiichi's parents, 74-year-old Osamu Miki, a retired engineer with a lot of work experience in the Middle East, and his wife, 72-year-old Keiko, also came and experienced for the first time our rambunctious New Year's Eve celebration. If their ear drums split, they didn't give a hint: it was a new cultural experience for them.

* * *

To kick off the New Year, Osamu and Keiko invited us to something very special: a traditional Japanese New Year's Day breakfast at our son-in-law's and daughter's Global City apartment. My Japanese *balaes* thoughtfully brought all the ingredients from their native Kobe, to ensure that the Japanese meal would be authentic. We began with traditional appetizers, called "O-setchi ryori," which always consist of cold foodstuffs, such as sweetened beans and seaweeds. Keiko explained that these things are always prepared ahead, to give the Japanese housewives a break from cooking during New Year. Then came the famous, frightfully expensive Kobe beef and the handmade cold *soba* noodles, which were capped with green tea that Keiko prepared from fresh leaves and Japanese sweets. We could have been in Kobe eating a traditional New Year's breakfast, and we showed our appreciation by gobbling up every bit of the delicious meal.

* * *

Two days later we took the four Mikis on a tour of Corregidor, which, I must say, was very well-organized by Sun Cruises. At first we hesitated to invite our *balaes*, as it might rub on their sensibilities the wrong way; but we all have been talking about the war and Osamu has been reading everything about it that he could lay his hands on. On their second visit here, it seemed they were ready for Corregidor.

Seeing the destruction all around the island fortress and Manila, which was shown by a documentary film on board the hydrofoil, Keiko felt so sad about the enormous loss of lives on both sides. But Osamu couldn't understand how Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who at one point commanded a combined Allied force of 200,000, could have thought of leaving his men and fleeing to Australia. The Japanese traditional thinking at that time, of course, was to fight to the last man, which they did in Corregidor against MacArthur's counter-offensive. I explained that it wasn't the general's decision but an order from the US high command—so that he could personally take charge of the reconquest of the Philippines and Asia. But Osamu, who would have been drafted into the war as a young man had it dragged on for another year, merely smiled, unconvinced that MacArthur's flight was justified.

Those few days of the new year were very culturally informative for all of us.

Memories of early schooling

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

IN MY second year of high school, the first thing we did before classes was to knock down and clear the mounds made by mud crabs the previous night. Our schoolhouse was a squat, one-story structure with nipa roof and walls of beaten bamboo over an earthen floor. The classrooms were built around a quadrangle in the center of which was our library, also of bamboo, including the benches.

But we forgot all about the mud holes the moment our teacher brought us to the courtroom where Shylock, the merchant of Venice, demanded his pound of flesh; and where we listened in awe to Portia as she countered with "the quality of mercy is not strain'd"; and where we empathized with the character of O. Henry.

Home Economics classes for the junior and senior years were held a short distance away, in a wooden structure that used to be the school's division office, while those for freshmen and sophomores were farther away, in a wing of the present division office. On rainy days, we had to wade through the flooded athletic field to get there.

Here we learned how to make *polvoron*, nougats, macaroons and bread pudding; bake ambrosia and pineapple upside down cakes; to cook *aroz ala valenciana* and *morcon*; to produce a "balanced meal" and compute a balanced budget; to hand-sew a set of apron, pot holder and—believe it or not—a "headband" which had to be worn for cooking classes, a complete layette, a chemise and two kinds of dresses.

We were also taught how we came into being, starting with lessons about the male and female reproductive organs, and proceeding to conception, to birth; how to feed and bathe a baby (each of us had to take turns bathing the doll with the whole class voicing their observations and comments, on which our grades were based).

The objective seemed to be that if you got married right after high school you'd land on your feet, ready to face the world.

Convocations and other school activities took place in the grandstand in the athletic field fronting our school. Here we staged plays and tableaus, delivered our campaign speeches—with "inspired plagiarisms" from the writings of Jose Rizal, Manuel Quezon, Claro M. Recto and Carlos Romulo—for the student government elections.

There was no laboratory to speak of and the science teachers had to bring microscopes and test tubes to class if only to show us how the instruments illustrated in our textbooks looked and felt in real life. Yet our teachers were able to make us see our place in the universe and the animal kingdom, and to nourish our sense of wonder at the whole miracle of life from the amoeba to the durian tree. But life had not been that miserable.

I spent my freshman year in a wooden two-story building that had a big library next to the laboratory and a well-equipped kitchen for Home Economics. There was no gym, but we had a basketball court in the quadrangle.

Our school was located "out in the country" but near enough for us to walk home although we had a school bus that brought us to and from school in the morning, at noon, and afternoon, for which we paid in chits, just enough for the salary of the driver and for the cost of the gas. Packed lunches were unheard of.

Here we took turns reciting Mark Anthony's oration before the class, and listened, speechless, as our teacher described Omar Khayyam's "False Dawn," while asking us to memorize, for life, the stanza that he thought was the message of the entire Rubaiyat: "I sent my soul through the Invisible/ Some letter of that after-life to spell,/ And by and by my soul returned to me/ And answered, 'I myself am Heaven and Hell.'"

Best of all, the school stood on a huge campus that smelled of wild flowers and acacia blossoms. Part of our extra-curricular activities was tending a vegetable garden where we also planted peanuts and camote. If you got on the first trip of the bus at 6:30 a.m., you could visit your "plot" and check out the buds that sprouted the night before, while marveling at the colors of the rainbow, flattered by the sunrise on the dewdrops still cradling in the leaves and grass.

But then that early in life, I learned that all good things must end, and for me it ended that afternoon of my freshman year with the last flag ceremony on the last day of classes, before "summer vacation." I cried with unbearable sorrow.

Things got a little better in my senior year. We had a new building by the sea, constructed on the same spot where the pre-war Sulu High School had stood and where my mother graduated from.

Only the sound of waves crashing against the boulders intruded into our thoughts as we produced the school paper in a cubicle by the library without a typewriter. How we did that and how we all turned out to be still amaze me.

We qualified to study in the best universities in Manila and elsewhere; some of us now live and work abroad. We became fairly successful professionals, diplomats, businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, (and one penurious journalist); and homemakers who brought up healthy, bright and responsible children, and who didn't get hysterical when abandoned by a househelp.

"We" received our education in the public school. I wouldn't have had it any other way. Now we—in the poorest provinces of the country, where even schoolhouses are few and far between, and where going to school in peace is a priceless privilege—cannot afford the time and the expense for pre-school and additional years of secondary education. Just give us well-educated, well-trained and committed teachers, and good, well-printed textbooks. That's all.

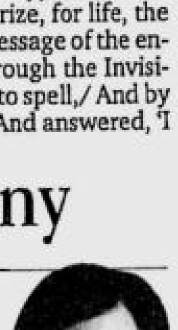
* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Testimony

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



PLANT a tree, have a child, write a book: for many people of a certain age, this is the benchmark of achievement. I do not know if Ana Mari S. Calero, who ran a progressive kindergarten in Pasay before she and her husband emigrated to Australia in 1982, has planted any trees. But she has children and has written a book. Her book, "Three Continents," published by the De La Salle University Press in 2001 has, sadly, not reached many bookstores, but it is a book deserving of the widest circulation. Simply but eloquently written, it is the testimony of her life as an individual, of her life in her long and loving marriage with Jaime Calero, and of the life of the generation that came of age during World War II and the decades immediately after.

Ms Calero's life story, as the title of her autobiography states, spans three continents: Asia, Europe and Australia. It also spans three periods of the Filipino experience: the pre-war years now seemingly so remote, the war and liberation years, now apparently so surreal, and the Filipino diaspora to all four corners of the globe in the 1970s and 1980s. Without any pretense, and with complete honestly, she chronicles her life, her impressions, the people she knew and knows, producing testimony of the highest importance: a summary of the journeys of a generation.

It is her testimony on the period spanning World War II, from the Japanese invasion to the Battle of Manila (the 60th anniversary of which was soberly recalled last Feb. 3) that concerns me today. Ms Calero begins with sobering statistics from a dear friend of hers, Ambassador Johnny Rocha: "Statistics indicated that 30,000 civilians perished in those 28 days that it took for Manila to be liberated, due to mortar and artillery shelling from the Americans. Seventy thousand died as a result of the systematic executions and pillage by the desperate Japanese forces, led by Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi."

Ms Calero herself tells of her family's experiences during the destruction of Manila in 1945, in the fifth chapter of her book. It makes for riveting and horrifying reading. Two extracts must suffice—bear in mind, as you read, that the author was only 7 years old as all this was happening.

"It was early in the morning when a series of explosions was heard. At first, no one seemed to pay much attention to it, but eventually it became more intense, which put people on edge. Suddenly, the whole area shook at the sound of an explosion. The bomb fell on the house across the street. The balcony had been crushed. Three men on the balcony were hit: limbs flew and the head of one hung from his neck. The two other had been torn to bits. Piercing screams for help followed. Tita Mary ran out of her house to help, but realized that the men were beyond help.

"The house started to burn. As it was Ana's [the author's] first sight of men's limbs blown to bits and of a shattered house, she could not help but shudder as the horrid picture kept coming back to her mind. All of the children were then made to move to another part of the house. Neighbors with their families started to come into the houses…"

This was the beginning of their ordeal. By the 12th of February, "the night raged with fires… All over Manila, fires had erupted. An orange, reddish film covered the sky. In some portions of the sky, the gray smoke was thick. Manila was a raging inferno. Sadness overtook the people as they witnessed the maddening scene."

The Battle for Manila saw whole districts—Intramuros, Malate, Pasay—systematically put to the torch by the Japanese, its residents capriciously and cruelly killed; famous landmarks such as the Masonic Temple and De La Salle College on Taft Avenue, became the scenes of mass murder; places such as the Bayview Hotel, became the scene of the rape and torture of women by the Japanese. Others, such as the Philippine General Hospital, were turned into fortresses by the Japanese. The Americans shelled anything that could shelter the Japanese. And yet, as Ms Calero, recalls, "the American artillery shelling and mortar fire caused loss of lives and properties in Manila. Survivors, however, were all happy to see the Americans. The constant shelling and street-by-street fighting was a high price to pay for freedom."

Indeed it was, but this is something absolutely crucial to understanding the death of Manila in 1945: it was overwhelmingly viewed as Liberation by those who lived through it. While it is equally important to remember those who felt bitter over the cost of the destruction of Manila—eloquently expressed by Carmen Guerrero Nakpil in her famous essay, "The Benevolence"—it should always be pointed out that the right to decide on what their experience should be called belongs only to those who lived through it. Who suffered through it.

For this reason, although the cost was extremely high in terms of life and treasure, the peoples of Holland, Belgium and France overwhelmingly viewed the expulsion of the Nazis from their land in 1944-45 as Liberation. So did the Chinese: the Rape of Nanking was the opening atrocity in the Japanese "War of Aggression," just as the Battle for Manila was the closing atrocity in the same war.

To understand why this must always be so—why we should accord to the survivors the right to call the period they endured "Liberation," instead of assuming we know better—read Ms Calero's book. There is much more in her book, besides.

(Available from DLSU Press.www.dlsupress.com or call 536-1761.)

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Photo ops

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

SOME politicians should be careful with staged photo opportunities. If they are not careful with their facial expressions while on camera, they might turn off the public instead of conveying a favorable image for themselves.

This is how Dovie Sainz of Cebu City looks at the photo of Senators Mar Roxas and Serge Osmeña that came out in the Jan. 28 issue (Page A7) of the INQUIRER. In that picture, Roxas was shown doing a "thumbs down" sign beside Osmeña who displayed an identification card of College Assurance Plan. The two had a happy look on their faces.

The photo accompanied the news report that, upon the request of Osmeña, three Senate committees will investigate the cash-strapped CAP for its alleged failure to meet its financial commitments to its 700,000 or so planholders. Beside that news was a related story that carried the head "Planholders fear for kids' college education."

The reader wrote: "I am just wondering why Sen. Mar Roxas and Sen. Serge Osmeña are smiling while making a thumbs down sign at a CAP card. Are they 'glad' that many Filipinos are now unsure if their children can go to college or are they 'elated' that many Filipinos might not get their pension from CAP?"

I, too, felt uncomfortable when I first saw that picture. Obviously, it was not a stolen or candid shot. It looked like the two senators sidled up to each other and made the gestures mentioned by the reader for the benefit of an INQUIRER photographer.

I do not know what was going in the minds of Roxas and Osmeña at that time, but one thing is sure: CAP's tight financial situation is no laughing matter; for the affected planholders, it is a cause for serious worry.

Publicity

The photo in question must have touched a raw nerve among the thousands of Filipino families that scrimped on their hard-earned money to invest in CAP's educational and pension plans. From the looks of it, CAP may find it difficult to deliver on its promises to them.

By their action, Roxas (who is supposedly media savvy) and Osmeña may have conveyed a mini version of "Nero fiddling while Rome was burning." It's a kind of message that some planholders do not need to hear at this time when the collegiate studies of their children are in danger of being disrupted by CAP's failure to pay the tuition fees that it committed to defray.

A veteran INQUIRER photographer I talked to about the picture was not surprised by that photo booboo; it was bound to happen. He said public officials, in particular, congressmen and senators, are so enamored with publicity that they practically seek out media photographers to "shoot them" in the hope that the shots will be used by the newspaper editors or TV producers.

He remembers some of these publicity hounds who have this practice of joining the huddle of their colleagues once they see a photographer from this newspaper aiming his camera at the group. To make that insertion act (or *singit*, as it is called in the dialect) look convincing, the "intruder" puts on a serious facial look or makes a gesture that gives the impression that he is actively involved in the discussion.

But the photographers are already wise to this strategy. If the quality of the photo will not be adversely affected, they recommend to the editorial desk that the "gatecrasher" be "digitally cropped" from the photo to maintain its integrity.

Camera conscious

On the few occasions that I went to Congress to attend to some business, I observed that our lawmakers are very conscious of how they look, walk or talk when there are photographers or TV cameras in the premises.

Our congressmen or senators are only too happy to oblige the requests of newspaper photographers, especially from the broadsheets, to take their picture while inside the session hall. And more so if those photos make it to the front pages of the newspapers.

A photographer of this newspaper told me that the jostling for photos by politicians is more pronounced inside Malacañang. When an event is held in the Palace with the President in attendance, the occasion is not complete without the attendees asking that their pictures be taken while they are talking to or near the President.

For prospective candidates for public office, those photos could be effective propaganda materials in the campaign, especially if they belong to the President's political party.

If it's any consolation to our public officials, the craving for publicity also applies to so-called socialites or "pretty people" whose week is not complete unless they see their photos in the lifestyle sections of the newspapers or they are featured in TV programs that cater to their social class.

Militants

Still on the subject of photo ops, I learned from an INQUIRER photographer that the cause-oriented groups in our country are no different from our politicians when it comes to posing for the cameras.

While the photographers or TV camera personnel are covering the demonstrations of these organizations, the action is usually frenzied. The placards are raised high for everybody to see and the protests are shouted loud and clear so the boom microphones can pick them up. As soon as the reporters and their photo crew leave the area, so do the rallyists and their leaders.

Sometime ago, the INQUIRER published a photo of the members of a leftist group manning the picket line in a five-star hotel in Makati City in support of the labor union deadlocked in collective bargaining negotiations with the management.

The day after that picture came out, I received a strong letter from another left-leaning organization protesting the newspaper's favorable treatment of that event. It complained that when it undertook a similar action earlier, the INQUIRER did not send a reporter or photographer so the public would have known what they did for the striking workers.

When I tried to explain the reason for the absence of the INQUIRER's reporter or photographer from the event, I got a lecture on fair news reporting and an accusation that the newspaper was "in the payroll" of its rival group!

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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No to Burma as Asean chair

WE support Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's position on Burma's (Myanmar) scheduled chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2006. The position taken by Pimentel is clear—"Myanmar does not deserve to chair Asean in 2006."

The Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), an international non-government organization advocating for justice and democracy in Burma, believes that the Philippine government should stop adhering to Asean's constructive engagement policy on Burma because this policy has failed miserably to bring justice and democracy in that country. Worse, despite pressures from the international community, the military rulers in Rangoon remain insincere in starting democratic political reforms.

Violations of human rights that include rape, arbitrary killings, forced labor, forced relocation and destruction of ethnic villages fill Burma's human rights record. And despite the promise of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to address lawlessness and inhumane acts within the country, local authorities are still bullying their own citizens.

Right after the ouster of Gen. Khin Nyunt last year, the junta of equally repressive generals led by Gen. Soe Win—the alleged mastermind of the Depayin Massacre in Burma—echoed the old promise of reforms. Desperate to gain international recognition, the junta released more than 9,000 prisoners at the height of the Asean Summit in Laos. However, Burma watchers know that most of the released prisoners were not political detainees but petty criminals. Also, the junta shows no sign of freeing opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and has even extended her house arrest for another year.

We believe it is high time for the Philippine government, the Asean and the United Nations to change their policy on Burma. The Asean, in particular, should cast out its rogue member.

As a reputed bastion of democracy in Asia and the survivor of a dictatorship, the Philippines has the obligation to lead Asean in criticizing Burma's human rights record and pressuring Burma to institute democratic reforms.

Pimentel is right—when the house of the neighbor is on fire, we cannot just fold our hands and say we cannot interfere. We should at least call the attention of that neighbor that his or her house is on fire. And if Burma is unwilling to change, Asean should not give it the Asean chair in 2006; instead Asean should call for its expulsion.

There is no doubt about it, Asean's constructive engagement policy with Burma is a failure. The generals ruling Burma have only used this policy in bullying their own citizens. Burma as Asean chair in 2006 is simply unacceptable.

—GUS MICLAT,
executive director,
Initiatives for International
Dialogue (IDD),
15 Door 15, Casal Bldg.,
Anonas Road, Quezon City

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The Salonga option

IN THE INQUIRER'S Jan. 14 issue, it was reported that former Sen. Jovito Salonga was dared by militants to lead the impeachment drive against President Macapagal-Arroyo. He declined the offer due to impairment of his sight and hearing.

Considering his unblemished character, his clarity of thinking and excellence in writing in spite of old age, this legal luminary, former law professor and senator is most qualified to lead our country and reform our rotten government.

Our politicians lamentably cannot change their ways. Neither can our uneducated and impoverished masses. But I am of the strong belief that Salonga is capable of reforming our government given the chance. Who knows, this great man may be the long-awaited messiah of our oppressed and starving countrymen.

—BENJAMIN C. DE LA FUENTE,
1858 Blumentritt St.,
Sta. Cruz, Manila

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SSS urged to be more considerate

THE GOVERNMENT is not supposed to make life difficult for senior citizens (Filipinos who are over 60 years old). But the government is doing just this through the Social Security System. The SSS has written me to report to any SSS office before Jan. 31, 2005 for the SSS to know that I am still alive and entitled to continue receiving my monthly pension.

When I complied, a factotum in the SSS MAC, East Avenue, Quezon City told me to "come back tomorrow" because there were not enough SSS employees to interview the hundreds of SSS pensioners who had arrived ahead of me. When I insisted on being interviewed, an SSS woman factotum pointed to a certain Modesto Lopez who insisted that I return the following day. Also, a security guard shouted at me to cooperate and just follow orders.

Before leaving the SSS MAC, I asked some SSS pensioners how long they have been waiting for the interview, and all of them told me that they have been going back there for several days for the interview for fear of losing their monthly pension.

Since the SSS cannot guarantee to interview an SSS pensioner on the day he/she reports to the SSS because of system paralysis or downright managerial incompetence, the SSS should spare its pensioners from unnecessary inconvenience by (1) interviewing the pensioner by phone, (2) by mailing the SSS interview form to the pensioner, or (3) by sending an SSS interviewer to the pensioner's house.

Certainly, the SSS can do this if its executives have any respect for SSS pensioners as expected of civil servants worthy of their annual salaries in the millions. Don't you think so?

—T.B. ABAYAN,
13-A Banning St.,
North Fairview, Quezon City

Investigate the ERC

THIS is in relation to the decision of the Energy Regulatory Commission granting the National Power Corp. a provisional authority to increase its electric rates by 98 centavos per kWh. However, the actual rate being implemented is P1.36. Let us consider the following:

1. The ERC appears to have totally forgotten the nightmare of the 13-centavo provisional increase granted to Meralco in 1994, which resulted to a mind-boggling overcollection of P13 billion, the refund of which was ordered by the Supreme Court in 2003. The ERC has not learned a lesson. Should the provisional increase be proven to be unwarranted, how will Napocor be able to refund the overcollection when it is saddled with over P500 billion in debts and over P200 billion in accumulated losses?

2. The ERC granted the provisional authority while the hearing is still going on, with Napocor still to justify its petition for increase. Clearly, the approval was rushed in order that the much-delayed privatization of Napocor could be made attractive to investors at the expense of the government and the consumers.

3. The decision of the ERC did not even mention the causes of Napocor's huge losses and profuse financial bleeding. The total losses of Napocor almost equals the profits made by the three independent power producers of Meralco. This is vulgar and nauseating.

4. Meanwhile, the ERC allows Meralco to pass on to the consumers 16 percent of system loss. (The Electric Power Industry Reform Act allows only 9.5 percent.) This is a blatant violation of the ERC's mandate to protect the interest of the consumers instead of the utility's.

5. Adding insult to injury, why does the ERC also allow Meralco to arbitrarily disconnect service within 15 days when the consumer has an outstanding deposit for service and unpaid bills? As these deposits are no longer allowed under the new Magna Carta for Household Electricity Users, when will the ERC order Meralco to return these deposits amounting to over P12 billion plus interest? Incidentally, a Pasig RTC ruled that arbitrary disconnection is without due process and illegal.

7. Lastly, what happened to the orders of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals nullifying the price adjustments and unbundling of rates granted by the ERC to Meralco? Have they been completely forgotten?

It has become imperative for Congress to look and re-examine, in aid of legislation, these highly anomalous practices and abuses being perpetrated against the public due to the failure of the ERC to exercise its mandate.

—LORENZO S. SACDALAN,
executive director
and spokesperson,
Federation of Concerned
Organizations of Balut (FCOB),
2448 Pinoy St.,
Balut, Tondo, Manila

Whitewashed?

SOME TIME in May 2003, officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs were the subject of a front-page news story of the INQUIRER for failing the "lifestyle check." What has happened to these officials?

I heard that the BIR official—who lives in Ayala Alabang, owns 11 vehicles and hordes of businesses and other properties—has "disposed of" his assets to his relatives and friends. In fact, the Ayala Alabang house has been purportedly sold to an in-law, who is a congressman. According to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, the Ayala Alabang house is registered in the name of the BIR official's sister-in-law who has no means to acquire it. Have cases also been filed against the dummies?

Gen. Carlos Garcia's properties were seized. Why not also the assets of those BIR and customs officials?

—ROLANDO PACAMARA,
1580 Topacio St.,
San Andres, Manila

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Let the truth see the light

LAST Sunday's Talk of the Town (PDI, 1/30/05) laid bare the deep wounds that have been eating at the once glorious Left movement that I respected in the dark days of martial law. What I read and saw was ugly and downright disgusting.

Cadena de Amor, Kampanyang Ahos, Operation Missing Link, Save the Center—what horror. Sounds like the military (read: right wing and fascist) campaigns in those days. Come to think of it, sounds like Pol Pot, too.

That Ricardo Reyes exposes the dark side of the Communist Party of the Philippines/National Democratic Front is admirable, particularly when Jose Maria Sison unabashedly intends to kill him. Before the hit list gets shorter with New People's Army executions, or longer with anyone and everyone being added to the list, let's have an independent truth commission to investigate these crimes once and for all.

By independent, I mean neither state commissions nor so-called people's courts composed of any person connected with these purges in any way. Our country still has a few good men and women who are completely devoted to the truth, and whose impartiality and integrity cannot be questioned. No doubt, we will have to search hard and long, but there are Filipinos like that around.

By all means, let the truth be told, by those who were party to these crimes, but more especially so, by those who fell victim to these purges and who are still alive to tell us about those killings. Their wounds need to be healed. They deserve justice.

Let no one be spared—not Reyes and certainly not Sison. And when the whole truth is finally out may the victims find peace and justice. And may the Left movement find itself cleansed.

—MAITET DIOKNO-PASCUAL,
Quezon City

A difficult task for Aglipay

IF I keep quiet like the silent majority and do not speak of the wonderful job PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay has been doing as chief of the Philippine National Police, I would be missing out on a great opportunity to help promote loyalty and dedication to service among public officials. As it has been said, all it takes for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing. May I paraphrase the adage and say: For good work to flourish, good men must encourage and nurture it.

I believe that Aglipay is not the first to try to clean up the PNP which recently hit a real low in terms of public respect and confidence. During his term as PNP chief, Sen. Panfilo Lacson made serious efforts in fighting corruption and instilling discipline in the police ranks.

It will take time to restore our people's respect and confidence in the police, but I applaud Aglipay's valiant efforts and I hope he never tires in this seemingly monumental, if impossible, task. It is good to know that he is re-educating the police and sending them back to school to improve their behavior. And it is wonderful to see uniformed men in churches rather than in bars and drinking places.

—OFELIA BLANCO,
32 Milflores Drive,
Beverly Hills, Antipolo

Change of heart is needed

THIS pertains to the article of Christian V. Esguerra, titled "No law vs cybersex, PNP laments." (PDI, 1/28/05)

The arresting officers of the Philippine National Police noted that Republic Act 2928 (Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act) has nothing directly dealing against cybersex and, as a result, the government "lost its case against a Belgian national residing in Angeles, Pampanga." Worse, the article likewise cited a Department of Justice resolution, dated Nov. 2, 2004, stating that "mere possession of accessories used in the illegal activity was not enough to elevate the case against the Belgian in court."

The situation only goes to show that there will always be new situations and activities not covered by law, but they nevertheless violate human dignity and morality. There will always be people who will create new ideas and propositions which are basically evil and contrary to the basic conscience of man. These are the people who feed on and nurture their fallen nature. They have no sense of morality or accountability to a superior being. Hence, there will always be new crimes unimaginable decades ago.

We should not be surprised with all these. In fact, the Old Book wrote something to this effect. It said: "They are forever inventing new ways of sinning... They are fully aware of God's death penalty for those who do these things, yet they go right ahead and do them anyway. And, worst yet, they encourage others to do them, too." (Romans 1:30-32, New Living Translation)

Our laws as they are will never be sufficient to address all these newfound or newly discovered depravities. In fact, existing laws may even be raised as a defense by the culprits themselves. This only proves that not everything that is legal is moral.

All is not hopeless, however. But you have to understand that, as long as people keep on nurturing their sinful and fallen nature, nothing will change, not even our government. What is truly needed is not the enactment of new laws; it is a change of heart, an awakening or rebirth of the spirit and a keen understanding on the fear of God.

—CONSTANTINO L. NAVARRO III,
Suite 1504,
The Centerpoint Condominium,
Julia Vargas Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

To Our Valued Planholders and Stakeholders :

So much negative media has been written and broadcast about College Assurance Plan (CAP). **Some misguided and unscrupulous elements have been quick to claim CAP is insolvent and should be closed. Many of you have been grossly misled by this deadly, unrelenting and well-orchestrated attack on CAP.**

College Assurance Plan (CAP) made college education affordable for thousands of Filipinos. You trusted it before, you can still trust it today.

CAP sent its first scholar to college in 1985. Today, **84,490** scholars have graduated from college, **90,230** are presently enrolled in various colleges and universities and a total of **174,720** planholders are being served by CAP.

The CAP Traditional Pre-Need Plan was conceived in 1980 to provide parents with an inflation-free savings vehicle that guarantees payment to the school of tuition fees due when the beneficiary of the plan enters college. Since then, **CAP has paid out a total of 11.3 Billion Pesos in benefits (tuition fees, cash values, etc.) to beneficiaries of its plans.**

CAP has been and always will be a respectable company. As testimony to its stature, it has garnered awards and recognition which include :

- MOST OUTSTANDING PRE-NEED COMPANY
- NO.1 IN PRE-NEED EDUCATION
- RANKED 227 OF THE TOP 1000 CORPORATIONS
- HALL OF FAME – CONSUMERS UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES
- MODEL TAXPAYER – BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
- SUPER BRAND IN ASIA – READERS DIGEST

If so, you, our valued clients would perhaps ask... what happened? For a fair, honest and complete picture, here's what really happened...

Every year, an actuary does valuation work to predict a reserve liability at some point in time in the future when the pre-need plans sold will mature. It can go as far as 30 years in the future depending on the age of the beneficiary. Benefit payments are anticipated long before they occur, taking into account the inflation rate at the time the plan was purchased up to its maturity, no matter the cost.

In pre-need plans, the ARL is a prediction of contingent (future) liability. This ARL future prediction is matched against another future prediction - the company's trust fund asset growth.

Based on SEC rules, the **Actuarial Reserve Liability (ARL) or prediction of future liability is made to appear as an actual liability in CAP's financial** statements during the year 2003.

How can a prediction of future or contingent liability be declared as actual liability when in truth, no such actual liability occurred?

When this happened, some bureaucrats were overly eager to declare CAP insolvent. The inclusion of the questionable ARL, based on empirical data, has been 42% off in the last 3 years and makes the whole valuation process erroneous.

Is it true what the Media and SEC say about CAP being insolvent?

NO! CAP is not insolvent. In fact, CAP had retained earnings of 7.0 Billion Pesos in 2003 and not a loss as bruited about by some sectors. If CAP is insolvent on paper, this is only because of :

1. Inclusion of ARL on the financial statements.
2. The questionable ARL which was made to appear by SEC as an actual liability has been, by empirical data, off by about 42% in the last 3 years.

If so, does CAP have the means to actually pay its planholders?

Yes. In spite of the difficulties.

CAP assures its valued planholders that it has the necessary assets and trust fund that can meet its long-term obligations of paying CAP scholars' tuition fees. These assets, together with all other pertinent documents, were already submitted to the SEC as part of the justification for the issuance of a new permit to sell.

Here's what CAP has already done to remedy the situation : **in January 24, 2005, CAP increased its capitalization from 300 Million Pesos to 8.0 Billion Pesos.** If it was able to pay for over 84,490 in scholars' benefits with a 300 Million capitalization, just think of what 8.0 Billion in capitalization can achieve.

Last January 24, 2005, CAP inked a $300 Million loan with First American Investment and Philippine Veterans Bank. The proceeds of this loan will go to paying planholder benefits.

In a recent newspaper article, SEC demanded to see the color of our money. Obviously, financial advisers will tell you that it's a chicken-or-egg situation where the influx of new capital won't happen if the SEC won't approve the memo of agreement and loan agreement that we presented as a workable solution.

The CAP trust fund portfolio as of December 31, 2004 is as follows :

Stocks (with BOC, ABC and MBTC)	P2,251,529,179.00
Real Estate (with BOC, ABC and PVB)	2,741,109,370.00
Fixed Income (with ABC, MBTC, EBC, PVB and EWB)	409,562,404.00
MRT Bonds (with BOC, EWB and PVB)	3,322,456,171.00
TOTAL	P8,724,657,124.00

It's true that CAP's cash flow has been somewhat affected by all the negative publicity as well as the absence of a Dealer's License and/or permit to sell which has caused collections to fall from 4.5 Million Pesos daily to less than 1.0 Million. This liquidity problem is temporary, and if need be, may be readily addressed by the sale of some of its MRT bonds. But because of this present environment where "vulture funds" are lying in wait, selling the bonds would be at a loss. These MRT bonds however, are backed up by the sovereign guarantee of the Republic of the Philippines and have a present day value of 3.0 Billion Pesos and a face value on maturity of 10.0 Billion Pesos.

CAP reassures its planholders it will not renege on its obligations.

First of all, CAP continues to meet its obligations and commitments to its planholders. In fact, during the First Semester of School Year 2004-2005, CAP fully paid 1.2 Billion Pesos in benefits. Of the 1.2 Billion Pesos in benefits due in the second semester, 425 Million Pesos were already settled.

If a school will not accept a CAP check as tuition fee payment, CAP can and will reissue the check in the planholder's or beneficiary's name.

We need you, our valued planholder, to understand this temporary problem and stand by us during these trying times as we remedy the situation. You are the heart and soul of CAP.

CAP also suffered from a double-whammy of spiraling tuition fees and dwindling yield rates on its trust fund assets. It could have taken the easy way out : tell planholders that it intended to pay no more than a 15% annual increase on tuition and other school fees (after all, that was the prevailing government ruling when they bought the plans). But, CAP decided to stick to its commitment to pay whatever the tuition fees would cost. This gesture of goodwill demonstrates the sincerity of CAP in wanting to stick to its commitment to planholders.

Some vested interests are maliciously misleading you and grossly painting a negative picture of CAP.

These unscrupulous persons are determined to bring down CAP's reputation and business leadership by advising planholders who aren't fully paid-up yet, to discontinue paying their plans or those who have fully paid-up, to surrender their plans.

Dear valued Planholders, do not be blinded by these wrong advisories. At the end of the day, if you follow them, you will all end up being victims of these misguided and misinformed elements and we both end up as losers.

Once a planholder stops paying a plan, it will make the plans lapse and therefore, it will no longer have any force and effect. This will also mean total loss of protection or limit the benefits due to the plan's termination value.

If you opt to surrender your plans, you would get only a percentage of your expected future benefit and in effect, even make it harder for both of us to solve this temporary problem.

College Assurance Plan's Vision and Mission – Helping Filipino Families cope with the spiraling cost of education.

CAP continues to believe in helping make the cost of quality education a reachable dream for every Filipino. In 25 years, we have faithfully served thousands of Filipino families with honor and distinction. Why some misguided elements would stop at nothing to bring this institution down... is beyond us. Together, let our voices be heard as we tell them... THEY CAN NEVER STOP A GOOD THING !

With faith in GOD, and with your steadfast and wholehearted support we shall overcome.

For further clarifications or inquiries, please visit or call :

CAP

CAP I Building
126 Amorsolo cor. Herrera Streets, Legazpi Village, Makati City
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A18 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2005

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Save ancestral homes, owners appeal

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACLAYON, Bohol—Ten families here have asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to help save their ancestral homes that will be affected by an on-going road widening project.

"We turn to you as our last hope to stem this tide of apathy and misunderstanding," the group told the President in a letter sent last month.

The residents said the Department of Public Works and Highways has conducted a widening of the coastal highway of Baclayon, the oldest *cabisera* (center) of heritage in the province.

They said that Gov. Erico Aumentado have assured them during their dialogues that the two-kilometer stretch east and west of the beautiful and historic church complex would be spared from the widening.

Still, they added, the DPWH continued with the project, "beyond what [was] agreed with the governor."

The group pointed out that if the plan was implemented, most of their houses would either be partially or fully demolished and "even part of the church belfry will be affected."

"We expressed our appeal to redesign the widening project to spare our homes but due to the loud clamor for 'progress' by our other co-Baclayons, we who own these heritage structures feel isolated and misunderstood as against development," the group wrote.

They told the President that most, if not all of their homes, were constructed at the turn of the century and display the characteristics of unique Boholano architecture.

"We are not against development per se. But if this means destroying a major part of the tangible heritage that make up the cultural identity of our community and town, we will pursue our appeal," they added.

"We have been planning as a group to maximize the historicity of our sites by developing heritage inns or stops which visitors can appreciate. Destroying part or all of any of our homes decreases the visual image of our cultural legacy, its soul, its spirit," the group stressed.

Their struggle to preserve their homes was being supported by a delegation from the Metropolitan Museum of Manila including arts patroness Bea Zobel.

Aside from Zobel, the delegation included Pilie Aquino, Karen Santos, Pátrick Reyno, Jose Ricardo Molina, Vince Deoduco, Tim Yap, Dominique Hue-Pouyer, Jean-Claude Hue-Pouyer, Olivia Campos, DJ Montano, Miguel Rosales, Cecilia Manalo, Joseph Gonzales, Silvia Ludo, Marco Protacio, Didier Pansiot and Jose Aguirre.

"You don't realize how much the weight of the past is held in these homes," Zobel said on Saturday during an informal gathering of Manila-based art lovers and representatives of the old homes at the home of Dr. Juanito Aya-ay.

Zobel expressed disgust over the disregard for the culture and the past by implementers of road widening project and warned that the loss would be irreparable.

"What would you show if you get rid of these beautiful homes?" she asked.

Another Bayan Muna leader slain

THE FAMILY of the slain Bayan Muna leader are now left on their own. DELFIN MALLARI JR.

LUCENA CITY—The Bayan Muna coordinator of this city was preparing supper for his family. Little did Ronnie Almaote, 38, know that it would be his last.

At about 7 p.m. on Saturday, two unidentified armed men barged inside the Almaotes' house in Purok Matahimik, an urban poor district in Barangay Cotta in this city, and killed the activist leader. A police report said the victim suffered four bullet wounds and three stab wounds in different parts of the body. He was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

After the killing, the suspects escaped aboard a motorcycle, passing through a maze of alleys.

Pedro Gonzalez, Pamalakaya national vice chair, immediately pointed at the so-called "death squad," allegedly composed of active military personnel and members of para-military groups, as responsible for the murder.

"The military has again unleashed the death squad. Ronnie's violent death signals a renewed reign of terror to silence the ranks of mass activists. But we will not be cowed in fear," said Gonzales, himself a survivor of a slay attempt last year in Gumaca, Quezon.

He blamed the so-called "death squad" as responsible for the rash of violence being committed against leftist activists in Southern Tagalog.

But Mhor Jose Broso, Southern Luzon Command spokesperson, strongly denied Bayan Muna's accusation. "First the military does not maintain a death squad," he said. "That's a rehashed accusation without any shade of truth. The murder was an ordinary criminal incident," Broso said.

At least four activists were killed in Quezon last year.

The victim's wife, Susan, said the suspects arrived at their doorstep looking for her husband.

"When they saw my husband in the kitchen, the killers shoved me and called my husband 'Kuya Ronnie'. They shot and stabbed him in front of our son, Jake," said the grieving wife, who is pregnant with their fifth child.

The victim's neighbors said the suspects had been asking for Almaote two weeks ago. According to Susan, the victim was no longer active in the activist movement.

She said her husband was working in a commercial fishing boat.

"Why would they still kill him? What will happen now to us," she said in tears. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Javier slay convicts brought to Muntinlupa

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Six prisoners convicted in the murder of former Antique Gov. Evelio Javier were transferred yesterday from the Antique provincial jail to the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

Lawyer Avelino "Bob" Javellana, former Constabulary Captain John Paloy, Vicente Vegafria, Ramon Hortillano, Henry Salaver and Eleazar Idemne left the port of Antique aboard the M/V Blessed Mother around 10 a.m. along with 14 other convicted prisoners and 16 jail guards. They were expected to arrive in Manila early today.

One of those convicted, Henry Seguerra, remained at the provincial jail after he earlier applied for parole before the Antique Parole and Probation Office.

He has been detained for 10 years and was eligible for parole because he has served more than the minimum sentence ordered by the court.

Another convict, Rolando Bernardino, remained at large after he escaped from the Antique Rehabilitation Center on October 2002.

The transfer was implemented nearly four months after the Antique Regional Trial Court sentenced all those convicted to *reclusion perpetua* (minimum of 20 years and one day to 40 years imprisonment) for the killing of Javier on Feb. 11, 1986. Seguerra was sentenced from six to 14 years in jail.

Javier's son Francis Gideon welcomed the transfer. "It's been more than three months and I thought they were not going to leave (the Antique jail)," Gideon said in a telephone interview.

Except for Seguerra, those convicted were also found guilty of the frustrated murder of Dolores Barte and attempted murder of Divino Bermudes, Blasito Juada, Bernie Salcedo, and Mariano Cabrera.

They were each sentenced to a minimum of nine years to a maximum of 17 years for frustrated murder and a minimum of three years to a maximum of nine years for each of the four counts of attempted murder. They were also ordered to pay P469,583.32 in damages to the victim's heirs.

Former assemblyman Arturo Pacificador, the alleged mastermind in the killing of Javier and three others were acquitted. Pacificador was among those who sent off the six convicts at the port yesterday.

Antique Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez ordered the immediate transfer of the six convicts after Idemne was seen last month in Pototan, Iloilo, the hometown of Judge Rudy Castrojas of the Antique RTC Branch 12 who presided over the Javier murder case.

Idemne was allegedly looking for assassins to kill Castrojas. He, however, denied the allegation and insisted that he was inside the jail at the Binirayan Hills in the capital town of San Jose when he was reportedly seen in Pototan on Dec. 24 last year.

"I feel bad about our transfer because we were apparently singled out," Javellana told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said 40 other prisoners convicted two years ahead of them were scheduled to be transferred.

Javellana maintained his innocence in Javier's murder. "Judge Castrojas was wrong and I'll try to prove that in the Court of Appeals."

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Batangas steel firm reopens after Balayan court issues TRO

By Mei Magsino-Lubis
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BALAYAN, Batangas—After securing a temporary restraining order (TRO) from a Balayan court, Steel Corp. of the Philippines (Steelcorp) in Barangay Munting Tubig here was ordered to operate again last Friday.

This, after the firm was ordered to shut down all operations following the closure order issued by the municipal government on Jan. 25, when Steelcorp failed to pay the mayor's permit to operate in the town.

The TRO issued by Balayan Regional Trial Court Branch 9 Judge Elihu Ybañez also ordered the company to start operating on Friday.

"But Steelcorp didn't shut down after its management received the closure order on Jan. 25," Balayan mayor Benjie Martinez said. "The company had to wait for about three days before shutting down because they had already run out of raw materials."

According to Martinez, the TRO hurt the municipal government since it was supposed to be running after a firm with a record of millions in unpaid real estate taxes.

"But it's the judge's decision and that's something we can't control," Martinez added. "So, I have no choice but to lift the closure order today."

Steelcorp, which has been producing galvanized and pre-painted sheets and finishing lines operating since 1999, has unpaid real property taxes amounting to P83 million.

The unpaid taxes, according to the computation of the Balayan treasurer's office, accumulated from the balances of real property taxes on Steelcorp's machinery and equipment since the first quarter of 2000.

Although Steelcorp has been prompt in paying its taxes on the machinery and equipment, the amount the company has paid is not sufficient, as it has only settled the taxes based on the acquisition cost of the property, not the prevailing cost.

In 1997, Steelcorp acquired its machinery and equipment and had them installed in 1998 at the Balayan plant.

A ruling of the Bureau of Local Government Finance under the Department of Finance dated Feb. 2, 2000 said the properties should be based on the acquisition cost at that time, converted at the average rate prevailing then.

But Steelcorp still paid its taxes based on the acquisition cost.

Since then, the provincial government has been demanding the Steelcorp to pay its taxes.

Warrants of levy and auction have been issued by the provincial government to Steelcorp but still it didn't pay its dues.

Finally a 20-day ultimatum on Sept. 17, 2003 was issued or the company faces forfeiture of its machines and equipment.

The case was fought in court last year and the Steelcorp lost.

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Stay away from ancestral lands, groups warn mining companies

BAGUIO CITY—The militant Cordillera Peoples Alliance has warned mining companies to keep off the ancestral lands of indigenous communities in the region following a Supreme Court ruling that upheld foreign stake in mining operations in the country.

"Affected communities will meet you with their might and will fight back if the government and mining companies will insist on opening up their lands to corporate mining. There will be more protests, mass demonstrations and resistance on the ground," said Joan Carling, CPA chair.

"The country will become a battleground against the plunder of the people's resources," she said.

On Feb. 8, the Supreme Court dismissed with finality a motion asking the tribunal to reverse its ruling last December allowing foreign mining firms to exploit the country's natural resources.

Carling said the protests would intensify because the government had already started to lure foreign mining companies to invest in the country after the court upheld the constitutionality of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

"The legitimacy, integrity and fairness of the Supreme Court is now under question. The people who [would] suffer from this decision will never forget this injustice," she said.

Communist rebels operating in the Cordillera said they would support moves to stop mining operations in the region.

"More mining operations would spell disasters for the indigenous peoples in the coming days ... We are committed more than ever to defend the people who oppose the entry of large scale mining in their lands," said Ka Filiw, spokesperson of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front, a regional political arm of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

"We are strengthening the political campaign against mining and massive logging through education [in affected communities]. But if the government responds by sending more soldiers to affected villages, then [that] will be the time to launch our attacks," he said.

Ka Filiw said they were closely monitoring Mankayan, Benguet and several areas in Abra, Mt. Province and Kalinga where "military visibility has been heightened."

Lt. Col. Preme Monta, spokesperson of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), said they had yet to receive a directive from top military officials to increase troop strength in Cordillera villages with mineral exploration permit applications.

"I think [the communist rebels] are only seeing the negative [side of the issue]. [They are] trying to paint a bad picture of the government [due to its] support for the mining industry," Monta said.

'Lumad' resistance

In Kidapawan City, the *lumad* group La Bugal-B'laan Tribal Association said it was not abandoning its fight against the entry of foreign mining firms into the country, even with the Supreme Court's recent decision, which trashed the motion for reconsideration filed by the *lumad* (indigenous people) group La Bugal-B'laan Tribal Association against the Mining Act of 1995.

"The fight is not yet over," said lawyer Marvic Leonen of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Inc.-Kasama sa Kalikasan (LRC-KSK/Friends of the Earth-Pilipinas). Leonen is the *lumad* group's legal counsel.

"It is the Supreme Court's decision but this is just one of the issues that we can raise," Leonen told radio dxND.

In a statement, Leonen's group said that in a span of 12 days and without even asking mining companies and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to respond, the Supreme Court *en banc* dropped the motion for reconsideration filed by the *lumad* group.

"The decision saddened and surprised us because there was not a chance for this to be argued in the Supreme Court. They decided on the motion for reconsideration without the other camp answering it," Leonen said.

The decision, he said, was a "minute resolution," which allegedly means it was not a full decision.

"They said that nothing would happen if the issue [was] argued upon again because they could see no new issue being raised," Leonen said.

The tribunal's decision contended that the arguments raised in the motion filed by the tribal group were already resolved in an earlier decision.

No new issue that would warrant a reconsideration of the decision was raised, the Supreme Court said.

But Leonen said their motion contained new issues.

He said they questioned how Saguittarius Mines, a company with a P16-million capitalization, was allowed to operate a P553-million worth of mining project in 30,000 hectares of land.

"The Supreme Court refused to see the new issues. It has not passed upon all the issues that the petitioners raised. The petitioners were not given a chance," Leonen said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Suspected smuggled pebbles seized

ARITAO, Nueva Vizcaya—Environment personnel on Tuesday seized three truckloads of white pebbles believed smuggled from an island-town in Cagayan.

Roberto Apigo, provincial environment officer, said the cargoes of white pebbles were seized after two of the trucks tried to slip past a checkpoint of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Barangay Calitlitan here.

Section 92 of the Fisheries Code bans the sale or export of pebbles and any other substances which make up any marine habitat.

Records from the shippers showed that a permit to transport was issued by Cagayan Gov. Edgar Lara, while the certificate of origin was issued by Calayan Mayor Joseph Llopis.

The sacks of white pebbles, with an estimated volume of 61 cubic meters, were taken from Barangay Dadao in the island-town of Calayan, records showed.

The permit holders included Nestor Escalante and Evangeline Llopis, reportedly a relative of the Calayan mayor.

Local environment officials, who asked not to be named, said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau was the authorized agency that should have issued permits covering the transport of minerals, such as white pebbles.

DENR sources said a government official had requested the release of the shipment "for humanitarian considerations." The official, according to the sources, said the shipment was owned by villagers in Calayan who depend on collecting pebbles for their livelihood.

The trucks were released on Wednesday afternoon on orders of Jerrysal Mangaoang, MGB regional director, reports said.

Calayan (pop: 14,000) is a small island off the northern tip of Luzon and Cagayan province. It belongs to the Babuyan group of islands.

Environment groups earlier expressed alarm over the reported commercial collection of white pebbles in the area, which they said, might cause ecological imbalance on the island.

The pebbles, more popularly known as Camiguin pebbles, are reportedly in demand among construction firms.

Lara, however, said the shipment was in order as the required documents had been scrutinized by the provincial mining regulatory board before the application was submitted for his approval.

"[The shipment] was initially questioned by the DENR because of apparent deficiencies in their [shipping] documents. There were indications that in one permit, the document issued by the mayor seems to have been tampered [with]," Lara told the INQUIRER.

"So we had to require the owners to secure the original copies to remove the doubts," he said.

Lara denied that the collection of pebbles in Babuyan Islands has gone up to a commercial scale. "But still, we make sure that [quarrying activities in the islands] are regulated," he said. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Dad wants cell phones banned in classrooms

ROXAS CITY—A provincial board member wants to ban cellular phones inside the classrooms for fear that these might distract the students.

In a privilege speech during Friday's session, board member Abel Martinez said at any moment the phone would ring due to an incoming message or call, disrupting the classes.

Martinez cited the recent National Achievement Tests for senior high school students where the top three schools were from the rural areas.

The top 20 schools were provincial schools, edging out the high schools from the cities and even the National Capital Region.

He said similar results came out in the recent High School Readiness Test.

He noted that distractions in the learning process of students in the cities hampered their intellectual and educational development. *Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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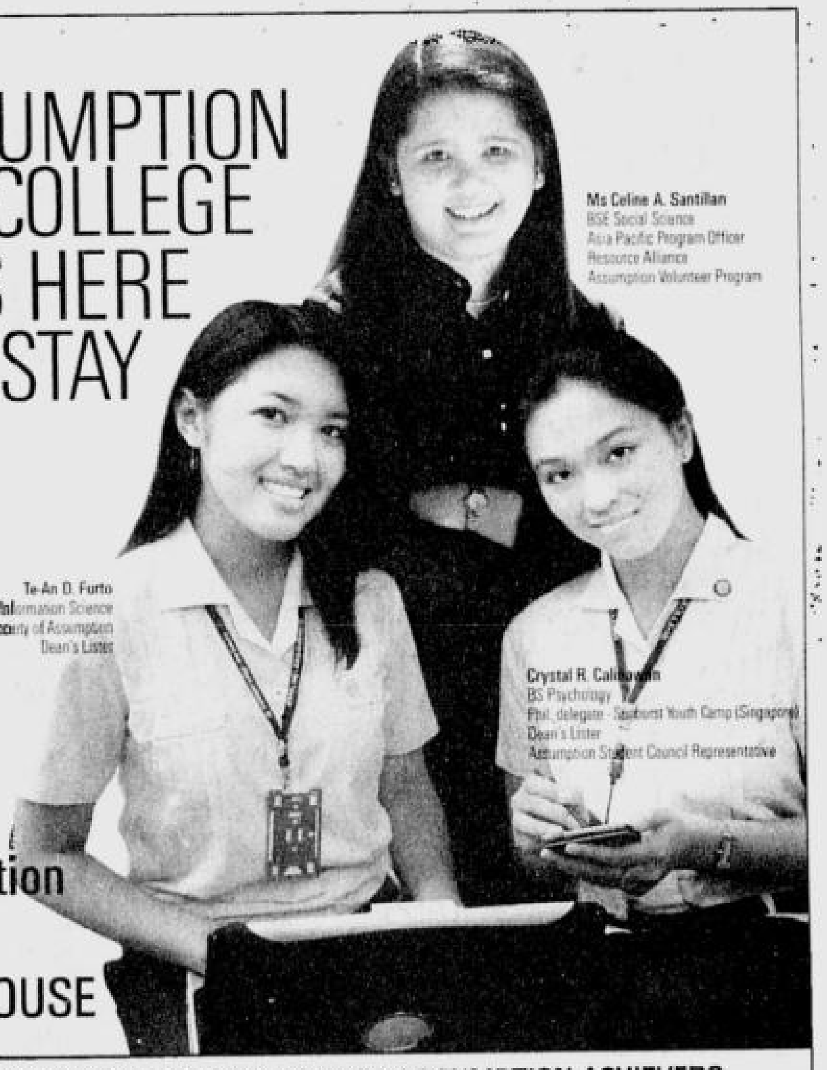
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Reds officiate first gay marriage in NPA

GAY comrades, Ka Andres and Ka Jose, are wed in an undisclosed area in Davao. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From page A1

help of comrades and the masses.

Andres held a bullet, as did Jose and each other's hands. The bullets represented their "commitment in the armed struggle."

Throughout the ceremony, a choir serenaded them with revolutionary love songs. After they signed their "wedding contract," the newlyweds kissed amid the usual applause.

Jose recalled the day he first visited the NPA camp for his revolutionary integration—a practice resorted to by city-based revolutionary activists before their deployment in the countryside. This was the first time he met Andres, who was preparing audio-visual materials for a basic revolutionary education seminar.

Jose was young and had a sexist, macho attitude and thought Andres was a typical *tiguwang bayot* (old gay), an object of scorn and ridicule.

Andres, an education instructor in the movement, was busy with his work and did not take too much notice of Jose.

Besides, Andres already had a boyfriend. Later, the two started to discuss politics.

"I began to understand the revolution and why gays are discriminated by society," Jose said in an interview.

Started as friends

When Jose's integration program ended, he decided to join the NPA. It was Andres who accompanied him to the armed unit—his first assignment.

They met several times during education training. At the start, it was purely a comradely interaction. Later, it became romantic.

"I realized he was caring and *malambing* (affectionate). He would never leave me in times of difficulty," Jose said.

Andres recalled when they both got separated from their comrades on their way to get supplies. It was raining and Andres spent the night alone in the forest without provisions. The following day, he ran into Jose, who had also spent the night in the woods, looking for him.

'Sweetheart'

Jose once confided to Andres that sometimes, he would find himself attracted to female comrades.

"I don't get jealous. Even if we are away from each other for months because of the nature of our respective works. I trust him," Andres said.

Neither is their age gap an issue. Jose is 21 while Andres is 54. They call each other "sweetheart."

"Andres helps me overcome the challenges and to become strong politically and ideologically," Jose said.

When the couple realized they were falling in love, they immediately sought the approval of their respective "collective" or cell unit.

It is the collective's responsibility to foster a strong relationship within the group and members are assessed every four months.

First gay marriage

As the first same-sex marriage in the NPA, theirs is a union long awaited by comrades who support gay rights in the movement. It is also a manifestation of the communist movement's recognition of the right to engage in gay relations and to marry.

Although the CPP already recognized gay relations and same-sex marriage, it was not easy for Andres and Jose to make the decision to finally marry.

First, the couple worked hard to change the traditional mindset of some comrades regarding gays and gay relationships. They attributed these biases to the prevailing "patriarchal" culture in Philippine society.

On gay relations

"[We] conducted painstaking discussions to make comrades understand gay relations and gay rights," Andres said.

"Gay cadres adhere to the strong Party discipline. They enhance the prestige of gays in the movement. This has gained positive results through the years. Comrades (male and female) and even the masses have learned to respect and recognize gays and their contribution to the revolution," he said.

As early as 1995, the CPP's Southern Mindanao Regional Party Committee started to discuss gay rights in the movement.

In 1998, a provision on gay relations and same-sex marriage was added to the CPP's guiding policy on relations contained in a document titled "On the Proletarian Relationship of Sexes (OPRS)."

Under the OPRS, the communist movement is committed to guide and ensure there is no exploitation in any relationship—heterosexual or homosexual.

What about kids?

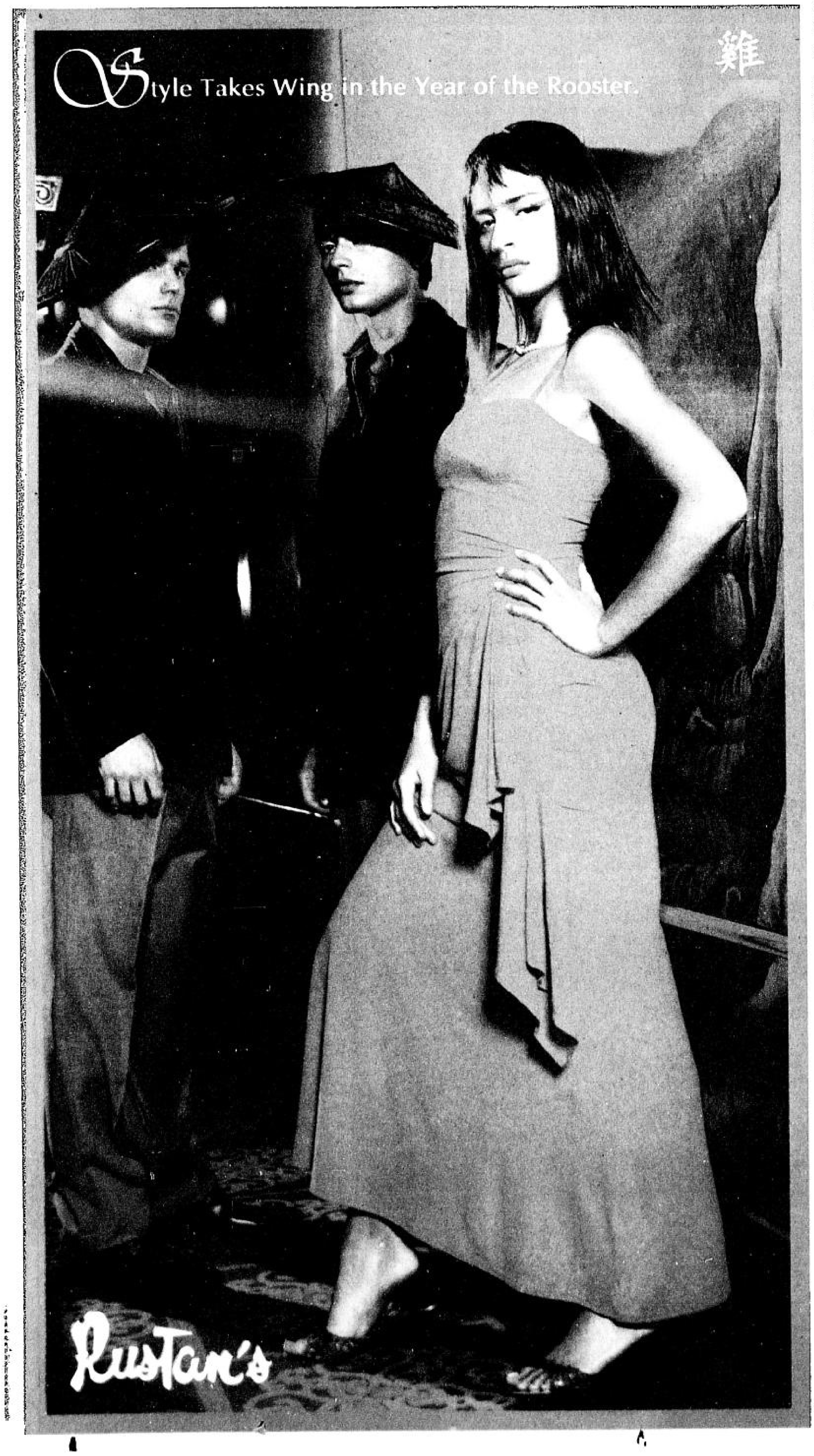
During the wedding ceremony, comrades asked Jose—in jest—if Andres could sexually satisfy him.

"If there is love, everything follows, including sexual satisfaction," Jose confessed.

The couple was also asked if they planned to have kids.

The newlyweds said they would deal with the issue later.

"What we have to do now—with the help of the Party—is to work on our marriage and to be strong while serving the people," Jose said.



Style Takes Wing in the Year of the Rooster.
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Pre-need firm . . .

From page A1

commerce committee, said in a statement.

Three Senate committees, including the one chaired by Roxas, are holding hearings about CAP's finances following reports that colleges and universities have refused to honor CAP-issued checks after several checks bounced.

CAP is the country's biggest pre-need company with more than 780,000 plan holders. Last year, the Securities and Exchange Commission suspended the firm's license to sell education plans after it incurred a deficiency in its trust fund.

A trust fund deficiency puts in doubt the ability of a pre-need company to pay benefits to plan holders in the future.

Companies that provide education, pension and life plans are called pre-need firms because they prepare for the needs of their clients at a specific period in the future.

Roxas said that if CAP was "truly patriotic and public spirited as portrayed in the ads," then the pre-need firm should immediately address its "massive trust fund and capital deficiencies."

At the Senate committee hearing on CAP's financial problems last week, the SEC disclosed that as of October last year, CAP had issued P149 million worth of checks that were not honored by banks for insufficiency of funds.

CAP president Enrique Sobrepeña, however, said the pre-need firm had already funded most of the checks and that P48 million remained to be settled.

CAP checks rejected

Roxas said in his statement that 23 schools in Metro Manila had stopped accepting CAP checks.

The schools, according to a SEC report dated Nov. 25, 2004, were Far Eastern University, Centro Escolar University, San Juan de Dios, Miriam College, Southeast Asian College, University of Sto. Tomas, Manila Central University, New Era University, Don Bosco University;

St. Paul's College-Manila, Letran University, Perpetual Help College, St. Jude's College and Hospital, La Salle-Dasmariñas, Holy Spirit University, Philippine School of Business Administration, Manila Doctor's University, National College of Business Administration, Makati Medical Center School, Philippine Aeronautical and Technological School, Assumption College, San Beda University and Lyceum.

Roxas has filed a bill that seeks to establish a special protection fund that will compensate plan holders in the event of insolvency of a pre-need company.

Protection fund

Under Senate Bill No. 1896, plan holders of a bankrupt pre-need firm may claim up to P100,000 each from a Plan Holders Protection Fund (PPF), which shall pay all claims within six months from date of filing.

At present, plan holders have no means of recovering their investment in case a pre-need firm collapses, according to Roxas.

The senator sought to address the problem through the creation of the PPF, much in the same way that Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. extends protection to bank depositors.

Under SEC rules, a pre-need company must set aside a portion of the premiums or payments collected from plan holders to build up the trust fund, considered a critical component of the mechanism designed to guarantee the capacity of the pre-need plan firm to meet its future obligations to stakeholders.

The pre-need industry has P66 billion in trust funds and some four million plan holders, according to Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the banks committee

Pre-need Code

In a statement, Angara said a pre-need Code would have to be drawn up to protect plan holders.

"The pre-need industry takes care of public money," he said. "It is the priority agenda of Congress to safeguard public money through a strong regulatory framework that will also allow the industry to breathe, thrive and realize its full potentials."

For his part, Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. said the government should work to help find a solution to the liquidity problems of CAP.

"There is already so much confusion and accusations by different parties on the matter of CAP's current financial woes," Revilla said in a statement.

He said the confusion was "not healthy for the plan holders and the pre-need industry." *Reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Felipe V. Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Switzerland now stricter with 'dirty money'

By Isagani Yambot
Publisher

ZURICH—Switzerland is now stricter with the alleged ill-gotten wealth of corrupt dictators and presidents, Dr. Franz Blanqart, former secretary of state of Switzerland, said at a recent briefing for a group of Asian editors and publishers.

He said a special law was passed about seven years ago that makes it impossible for "black money" to be stashed away in Swiss banks.

First, he said, "you have to prove who the real owner of the money is." Then, he added, "you [the person who wants to deposit money] should prove who you are."

"It is difficult now [since the passage of the special law] to bring 'dirty money' into Switzerland," Blanqart said. 'If we find 'black money,' it shows that our controls are working."

Before the passage of the new law, Switzerland was the favorite haven for the ill-gotten wealth of corrupt dictators, presidents and other heads of government because of its strict bank secrecy laws.

Ms Trix Heberlein, member of the Council of States and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for her part said the Swiss government had not changed its policy on the recovery of the alleged ill-gotten wealth of dictators deposited in Swiss banks, and current recovery efforts will have to continue to go through tedious legal process.

Heberlein said that all the alleged ill-gotten funds were "blocked" and the law would have to be followed to recover them and turn them over to the governments now claiming them.

Blanqart and Heberlein delivered their remarks after a "post-Davos" dinner tendered in honor of 14 Asian editors and publishers who had attended the 2005 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Meeting. The dinner was given by Holcim, a Swiss cement manufacturer that has plants all over the world, including the Philippines.

So far, the Presidential Commission on Good Government has recovered $683 million of the Marcos deposits in Swiss banks. The funds are being held in escrow in the Philippine National Bank.

In 1990 the Swiss Federal court ruled that $350 million in deposits, which had grown to $683 million with interest, that the Marcoses had stashed away in Swiss banks were ill-gotten.

Moreorless, an Australian website, said in its file on Marcos that his Swiss bank accounts were estimated to contain between US$3 billion and US$35 billion "stolen from his country."

The Guinness Book of Records, 1995 edition, said that "the total [of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth] since November 1965 was believed to be $5-$10 billion."

Sergio Salvioni, a Swiss lawyer hired by the PCGG to recover the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcos family, said he believed the Philippine government had just skimmed the surface of the Marcos wealth.

In an interview in 2003, he said the deceased dictator hid the money well.

"Maybe they don't even know where the money is," he said, referring to Marcos' heirs.

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Thai leader Thaksin wins bigger mandate

From page A1

through the ballot box, all but conceded defeat before the election but had hoped to limit his expected landslide victory by netting at least enough seats to launch motions of no-confidence.

Early exit polls showed their hopes had been dashed. One poll showed that Thaksin's ruling Thai Rak Thai, or Thai Love Thai, party may have captured as many as 399 out of the 500 parliamentary seats up for grabs. Another gave him 340 seats.

Unofficial results were not expected until late Sunday and the spokesperson for Thaksin's party, Surananda Vejjajiva, said he would make no comments until the count was in.

The leader of the main opposition Democrat party, Banyat Bantadtan, appeared resigned to a defeat.

"If it turns out that way (as the polls say), today we will have to congratulate Thai Rak Thai. They will have succeeded. They will have been able to establish a one-party government with a flood of votes," he said, inviting other opposition parties to join him to act as a check on the new government.

Thaksin joined his wife and three children at a Bangkok polling station. "I want the public to give importance to the word democracy, which is a matter of taking part on election day," the prime minister said.

The Election Commission conceded over the weekend that the campaign had been riddled with corruption but said it was difficult to catch violators red-handed. An earlier poll estimated that 10 billion baht (US$260 million, euro204 million) had been doled out to buy votes.

A high turnout was expected among the country's 44.8 million eligible voters, possibly eclipsing the 69.9 percent in the last general elections four years ago.

Twenty parties fielded 2,289 candidates, but only four or five parties were expected to win seats in the 500-member House of Representatives.

The party that Thaksin created—Thai Rak Thai—won 248 seats in its 2001 election debut, and had aimed to capture more than 350 this time.

Thaksin came under fire last year for alleged cronyism, inept handling of the bird flu outbreak and failure to curb sectarian violence in Thailand's Muslim-dominated south. His intolerance of criticism also raised concern.

But his reaction to the Dec. 26 tsunami was quick and effective, rushing to the scene with ministers in tow, barking orders and consoling survivors. Debate about his failings was soon swept off the front pages.

Villagers in the devastated areas lined up to vote at polling booths, often within sight of where their homes once stood and now dead family members lived.

"It's important to choose the government because the government is our last resort," said Jam Krathalae, a 35-year-old fisherman whose boat and house were demolished by the killer waves. "I have nothing left. The government would be the only help."

Nearly 5,400 people are confirmed to have died when the tsunami thrashed parts of southern Thailand. Another 3,100 people are still missing and hundreds are living in makeshift camps, from which voters were transported to polling booths.

In Thailand's southern province of Pattani, a 66-year-old Muslim woman said she was voting for peace in a region where more than 650 people were killed last year in the escalating insurgency.

"I hope my vote will make everyone concerned realize that we love democracy, that we are not violent," Jaemoh Benhabas said.

Helicopters and some 30,000 troops guarded polls in the south. No violence was reported, but protesters burned Thaksin campaign posters.

Thaksin, 55, is a self-made telecom millionaire who rode to victory four years ago on public disenchantment with the slow pace of recovery from Thailand's 1997 financial crisis. His vast personal fortune was a key advantage in forging a nationwide political network.

Populist initiatives delivering benefits such as affordable health care earned him the support of Thailand's rural majority. *AP*

"Basta Ampalaya para sa diabetes, rekomendado namin, walang iba kundi Charantia."

Dr. Guia G. Abad, MD, MPH
Chairperson, Operation Diabetes
President, Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines (AMHOP)

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Even PNP camps suffer from population boom

From page A1

officers and personnel—and their numbers are growing each year—may soon find themselves without headquarters to stay in.

The PNP is virtually running out of spaces for officers who should be staying inside camps, essentially to hold the fort while comrades are out in the field, according to Chief Supt. Francisco Llamas, Engineering Service director.

"Ideally, at least 5 percent of the population should be housed inside camps," he said in an interview. "These are supposed to be the key officers, like heads of operations."

But with only 1,500 spaces available nationwide, around 4,500 officers are practically "homeless," if not "squatting" inside police camps.

"The problem is clear—we have very little spaces so we have to go vertical, not horizontal," Llamas said. "It has to be condominium, not bungalow."

That means the PNP needs to construct additional floors atop existing buildings and even new structures in whatever limited space is left, he said.

Camp Crame, the PNP's main headquarters, alone has at least 380 "squatting" policemen, owing to the lack of available spaces inside the sprawling compound, the INQUIRER has learned.

There are a total of 1,048 policemen living in 19 camps nationwide. At least 240 of them are staying in Crame, according to the Engineering Service.

Camp Bagong Diwa, headquarters of the National Capital Region Police Office in Taguig, offers very little help since it is similarly congested, Llamas explained.

Besides regular police offices, it also houses a detention facility securing suspected terrorists and other high-profile suspects.

Bagong Diwa also has the Center for the Ultimate Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents, the PNP's rehabilitation facility.

Last December, the PNP held the groundbreaking for its P286-million condominium compound, a Crame-based project exclusively for the foot soldiers, or those ranked from PO1 to SPO4.

Generals and other top officers can't muscle their way in—they own property in swanky villages, anyway, top officials have told nonofficers.

The PNP has already invited bidders for the condominium compound that will consist of four five-story buildings to be located near the camp's Gate 3.

"The idea is to give decent houses to nonofficers because they are less fortunate," Chief Insp. Favel Dalog, chief of the PNP Engineering Service's construction and repair division, said in an interview.

The area was previously barren, strewn with some 30 families of nonofficers, stuffed in decrepit houses they had built and expanded over the years, said Llamas.

Since they will be displaced by the project, they will most likely be given priority among the hundreds of nonofficers currently based in Crame, Dalog said.

Llamas said screening would be very strict. Occupants will be chosen based on their positions, seniority and the need for them to stay in the headquarters.

Those who already own property in Taguig—courtesy of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority—will automatically be disqualified, the official said.

The sheer design and location of the housing project is sure to attract many policemen.

Future new homes

Each 35-square-meter unit will have two bedrooms and built-in cabinets. There will be cage-type laundry areas on the roof deck, like those in popular condominiums.

The compound will also have parking spaces and a playground.

All these will cost a policeman only his monthly quarters allowance of around P300, Llamas said.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay has already saved some P80 million for the first of four buildings worth around P75 million. It is scheduled to be completed within the year.

The budget came from trust receipts, or the PNP Civil Security Group's collection of fees from gun permits and license to operate security agencies.

The three remaining buildings will have to wait until the PNP generates another hefty budget, Llamas said.

National diabetes program names Charantia official food supplement

"Our patients' blood sugar level remains more stable for long periods of time."
- municipal doctors

Charantia, the country's leading brand of Ampalaya tea and capsules, has been named the official food supplement of 'Operation Diabetes,' the national diabetes prevention and control program of the Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines (AMHOP). AMHOP is composed of over 1,500 doctors running the country's public health centers.

Dr. Guia Abad (center, front), Operation Diabetes Chairperson and AMHOP President, with AMHOP doctors

'Operation Diabetes' aims to ease the burden of those suffering from diabetes and prevent its further spread. It helps organize diabetics into clubs to act as agents in promoting diabetes awareness and the right lifestyle of proper diet and regular exercise at the grassroots.

Operation Diabetes Chairperson Dr. Guia Abad said they made Charantia the official food supplement based on their consistent positive experience. "After a few days, or within a month of drinking Charantia tea to fortify their usual diet, regular exercise and medication, our diabetic patients have an easier time lowering their blood sugar level," said Dr. Abad, who is also President of AMHOP. Dr. Abad said Charantia is believed to help sensitize the body to diabetes medications.

Likewise, with each blood sugar test, she said the doctors could measure Charantia's benefit to the patient. In many cases, Dr. Abad said that with regular monitoring of the patients' blood sugar, the doctors were able to gradually reduce the more expensive diabetes medicines. The patients also reported marked improvement in their general well-being, such as, being more alert and active.

"We have always advised our patients to regularly eat unripe Ampalaya to fortify their diet. But as many cannot tolerate its bitter taste or get tired of eating Ampalaya daily, we advise them to take Charantia Ampalaya tea, which is the same vegetable but without its bitter taste. It's easy for them to take it daily," explained Dr. Abad.

Former BFAD Director says Ampalaya effective for diabetics

A former director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) affirmed the Ampalaya's safety and potency to control elevated blood sugar levels. Dr. William D. Torres, BFAD Director from 1999 to 2002, concluded that the vegetable, when taken regularly, "helps increase glucose tolerance and potentiate insulin." This after he reviewed over 200 studies on the Ampalaya in the past four years. Last December, Dr. Torres delivered a lecture, "Ampalaya: An Alternative Therapy to Diabetes," at the 2004 World Congress on Anti-Aging·Medicine in Las Vegas, Nevada . The event was attended by more than 4,000 medical professionals from over 20 countries.

"The Ampalaya is a useful and safe food supplement to complement the low-fat and high-fiber diet for persons concerned with maintaining a healthy blood sugar level," Dr. Torres said. "It's traditional use as a home remedy for diabetes is backed by hundreds of pre-clinical and clinical scientific studies." A Ph.D. in Pharmaceutics (University of Mississippi), Dr. Torres advocates that further studies be made to establish the Ampalaya as a medicine for diabetes.

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ANTI AGING MEDICINE
Dr. William Torres delivers his lecture on the Ampalaya in Las Vegas

Plan to oust Edong ...

From page A1

with the administration and did not directly name Angara as a target of the supposed purge, although the senator remained the subject of the INQUIRER interview.

Jailed on plunder charges but still acknowledged as the foremost critic of the Arroyo administration, Estrada has declared he will personally lead moves to unite the mainstream political opposition following its split between the Poe and Lacson camps in the May 2004 presidential election.

Estrada made this vow upon his return to the country late last month after a successful knee surgery in Hong Kong.

The lion roars to flatten Manobo lands

From page A1

nearby Maramag town.

"No police officer ever came to see me to investigate," he said.

Strangely, the local police blotter had the Manobos identified as the assailants, with the bullet mark on the bulldozer presented as evidence. The tribe had to submit its own formal "spot report" to amend the information.

About 20 men were reportedly involved in the shooting. Three of the attackers have been identified as Panoy Miranda, Pato Miranda and Babie Balejo, but no arrests have been made so far.

A BULLDOZER takes a rest after clearing fields planted to corn, cassava and other root crops in an area claimed by Manobo villagers as ancestral domain.

REX Laranio, one of the four villagers shot during the Dec. 22 land-clearing operations, recalls the incident from his hospital bed. PHOTOS BY JOEY R.B. LOZANO

Land clearing 'legal'

"The bulldozing is legal," says Liza Matunding, head of the Bukidnon People Power Agrarian Reform Organization (BPPARO). She showed photocopies of the certificates of land ownership award (Cloas) issued to her group for 61 hectares of land in October last year.

The BPPARO is one of at least six groups that had applied for Cloas covering 2,697 ha of land that was once owned by Bukidnon Farms Inc. (BFI). The company is owned by tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

Issuance of land titles covering ancestral lands has always been easy, especially for the moneyed and the powerful, according to an insider from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Some have never even set foot on the land titled to them.

This situation has been, of course, disadvantageous to tribal members who know nothing about paper titles and who could only cling on to an unwritten history of affinity to their territory.

"We have so many cases of forest lands that were titled. Right now that is our headache. Look, even the back of the (Malaybalay) capitol building: why was it titled in 1954? That's a big question," said Belino Epic, DENR senior forest management specialist, when asked about the complaint of another Manobo tribe whose land was titled to an influential family of Spanish descent.

"It's not only happening here (in Bukidnon), but throughout the country. They (title beneficiaries) must have some connection or, during that time, it could be money talks," Epic added.

Marcos cronies

During the Marcos regime in the '70s, Construction Development Corp. of the Philippines, which was owned by the dictator's crony Rodolfo Cuenca, allegedly took over three titles covering Manobo ancestral lands and "expanded by force to roughly 4,086 hectares," says Omar Junie Aranses, another head claimant.

The CDCP operation was tainted by massive corruption, Aranses observed, leading to its downfall and takeover by Cojuangco. Eventually, the entire area became the subject of one of the country's largest land reform initiatives after Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency in 1986 and ordered the sequestration of all Marcos crony-owned corporations throughout the country.

But Aquino's land reform program went awry in Bukidnon's Manobo territory. Former BFI employees were awarded three hectares each during the land distribution.

"Why were they given priority when most of them are not actual residents here? Besides, they have been paid their wages and benefits as employees," complained a Manobo chieftain, who is one of the ancestral land claimants.

The excess area was for distribution to landless residents of the municipality and the province. Many tribe members who disagreed with the amortization scheme stated in the Cloa did not apply. "Why must we pay something that we originally own but was fraudulently taken away from us?" argued Datu Petronilo Cul-om.

A MEMBER of the provincial mobile force in Bukidnon checks his high-powered firearm for a possible "confrontation" with gunmen believed to be encroaching on Manobo land.

Other tribe members who nonetheless went to the local office of the Department of Agrarian Reform to apply for Cloas claimed they were driven away. Out of almost 200 Manobo applicants, only 62 were allocated 50 ha of land outside the titled areas.

Meddling politicians

Politicians who wanted to build a base of supporters in the area were behind several erasures in the list of land reform beneficiaries, the tribal members said. "Professional" squatters from other provinces, at times accompanied by armed fanatical cults, also came in, they said.

"Those who have guns, those who are brave enough to occupy, those who have connections—it is they who will benefit from the land," Aranses said in Filipino.

"Military commanders assigned locally were also given parcels of land to ensure security," he added.

Aranses himself has the connection. He claims to be a nonvoting member of the Central Committee of Nur Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front.

"Misuari helped in the re-screening and recommended issuance of Cloas to our group in 1999," revealed Aranses, who leads the claim for 200 ha of land reform area that was once dubbed Bukidnon's "killing fields."

The unstable peace and order condition made it difficult for Cloa holders to occupy the area awarded to them or to pay amortization. Tribal members who have nowhere else to go stuck to what they assert as theirs and cultivated the land for survival.

But unlike Aranses and Matunding, who possess photocopies of Cloas, the Manobos do not have any paper to show proof of ownership. Thus, the bulldozers came in to clear the land for a new crop to be introduced—pineapple—under a joint venture arrangement.

Land conversion

A DAR administrative order allows the conversion of a land reform area into a joint venture, such as a pineapple plantation, according to the department's provincial officer, Julio Celestiano.

Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri was supportive of the idea. Last Sept. 28, the provincial legislative body passed a resolution endorsed by Celestiano, calling for the speedy release of Cloas to identified beneficiaries.

The 15-year joint venture agreement involves Davao Agricultural Ventures Corp. (Davco) and Cloa holders belonging to the umbrella Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma Primary Multi-purpose Cooperative (NMPMPC), which is headed by Aranses.

Davco has already advanced the payment of land rental, equivalent to P15,000 per hectare per year, for four years. Another P15,000 was added as compensation for crop damage caused by bulldozing activities as part of land preparation for the planting of pineapple.

Davco's chair and president is Rodolfo del Rosario, a former governor of Davao del Norte and listed as Mindanao's wealthiest politician based on the 2002 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth filed with the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

A phone call to the Davco office in Davao City confirmed the partnership. Davco is to produce pineapple under the label "Southern Fresh Product." The giant Del Monte Corp. will take care of marketing abroad.

NCIP: Cloas 'illegal'

Davco has already signed the agreement for Cloas covering more than 200 ha of land, Aranses revealed. The company would have already paid some P15 million in advance payment of land rental to Aranses' cooperative.

While the joint venture is presumed to be legal, it is the current rush to issue Cloas that is deemed otherwise, according to lawyer Reuben Lingating, chair of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

On Oct. 29, 2003, the NCIP and the DAR issued a joint memorandum circular for the "temporary suspension of land acquisition and distribution, and ancestral domain/ancestral land titling activities in contentious areas."

In an interview through his mobile phone, Lingating asserted that the circular was "still in effect" and that the Cloas distributed after its issuance, such as those of Matunding's group, were considered illegal.

But DAR provincial officer Celestiano asserted that the circular did not cover the BFI area after he had consulted with lawyers. The documents had been prepared for qualified beneficiaries long before the order was issued, he argued.

"[The] DAR must show us the list of beneficiaries or post it in public places for the entire population to know and determine if those listed are genuinely qualified," Manobo leaders pleaded.

Easier said than done

The demand appeared to be easier said than done. Last Sept. 20, or eight days before the provincial board endorsed the speedy release of the Cloas, Celestiano issued a memorandum instituting strict control on the availability of vital documents and official records related to the area.

"*Ngano nga ginasikreto man ang opisyal nga listahan kuno sa mga benepisyaryo* (Why is the supposedly official list of beneficiaries being kept secret)?" the Manobo leaders asked.

The bulldozer continues to roar and flatten crops that help sustain the tribe in favor of one that is intended for export. While each roar may be sweet music to Cloa beneficiaries—real or unreal—who stand to receive land rentals from the joint venture, it is not to a people who continue to be disenfranchised.

"*Duol na ang leon, mapatay na gyud mi* (The lion has gotten near, that spells death for us)," the old Manobo woman murmured, as she looked at the approaching monster equipment.

Matunding denied that the BPPARO was involved in the Dec. 22 shooting of the Manobo residents.

"It was us who were attacked," she alleged, offering as proof a bullet mark on the bulldozer. She threatened to file criminal cases against tribe members, including those wounded and hospitalized.

'Show of farce'

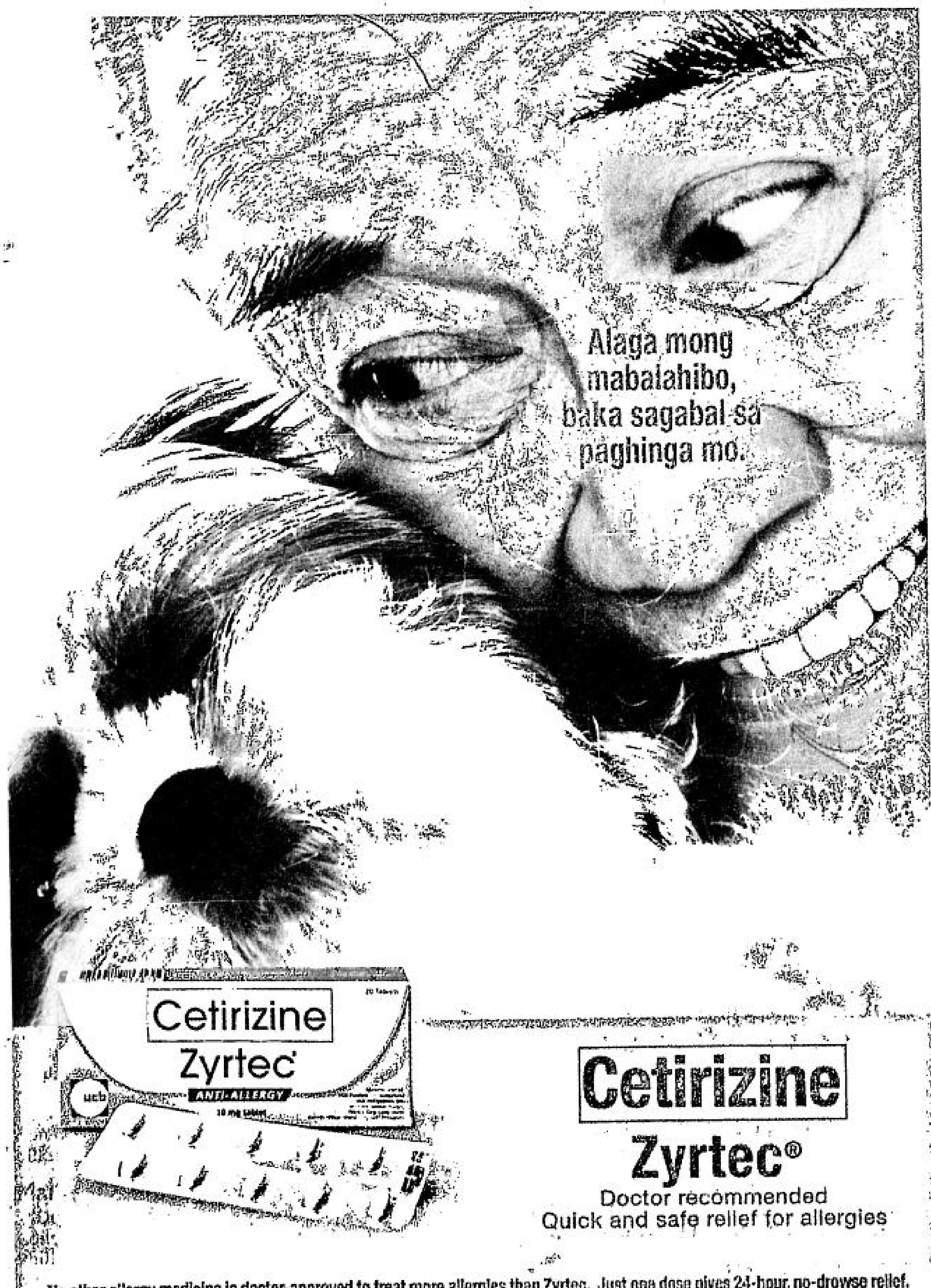
A few days before New Year's Day, a team belonging to the provincial police mobile force arrived. They were responding to an urgent plea by tribe members to halt the bulldozing. Armed men had been sighted again moving toward their direction.

Upon learning that this writer was around, the team summoned more policemen, one of them armed with a 30 cal. machinegun.

The arrival of police reinforcements turned out to be a "show of farce," according to the residents.

As tribe members and lawmen neared the area where the armed men were believed to be hiding, their civilian guides were ordered to stay put.

The law enforcers moved a few steps more. To everyone's surprise, they walked opposite the bearing pointed to them by the tribe. No one ever came back to apprise the community of developments.



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QC community stands up to rising crime

RESIDENTS of Project 4 in Quezon City are taking a more active role in preventing crime in their community.

Faced with the apparent inability of the police to protect them from criminals, residents marched in the streets urging neighbors to join a movement to stop criminality in the largely middle-class community.

Carrying a streamer and signs, local folk, mostly members of the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish, also sought justice for Ivy Diwa, a 24-year-old clerk who was gunned down during a robbery.

Wake up!

The streamer ahead of the march read "*Gising* Project 4! *Martsa Laban sa Karahasan: Para sa Mapayapa at Maunlad na* Project 4 (Wake Up Project 4! March Against Violence: For a Peaceful and Prosperous Project 4)," while the signs said "*Sugpuin ang Karahasan sa* (Eradicate Violence in) Proj. 4," "Be Vigilant" and "Justice for Ivy."

Parish priest Fr. Robert Reyes, who led the demonstration, said that aside from rallying people to join their anticrime drive, they were devising plans to alert residents about crime.

One of the strategies being considered is the setting up of bells at strategic places.

Residents could ring these bells to seek help if something wrong should happen, Reyes told the INQUIRER.

More than a week ago, two robbers on a motorcycle shot Diwa near her house on Legazpi Street after she refused to give up her cellular phone.

Reyes said she was hit in the head and died while undergoing surgery.

First to die

Although Diwa was the first to die in the hands of criminals, Reyes said she was not the first parishioner to fall prey to robbers.

Residents have been pointing to a robber on a motorcycle as behind the series of cell phone robberies in Project 4, he said.

"We want to create a more sensitive community. We will be more proactive this time," the priest said.

And while the bells are not yet ready, Reyes asked his parishioners to use their mobile and landline phones to alert authorities about suspicious persons or happenings.

He also urged the police not only to investigate and go after Diwa's killers but also to prevent crimes in the community.

"We hope to make Project 4 a peaceful community again," he added. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Two teenage boys die drag racing

TWO 17-YEAR-OLD boys died when their car went under a truck trailer while allegedly engaged in drag racing along the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard in Parañaque City at 2 a.m. yesterday.

Police identified the fatalities as Michael Kevin San Juan of Sunrise Street, La Paz Village, Makati, and Price Allan Cristobal of Perlita Street, San Andres Bukid, Manila.

San Juan, who was reportedly driving the ill-fated Opel Astra (WNC-430), died on the spot. Cristobal died in the hospital. *Irene C. Perez*

Toughie's life was worth ₱5

A HEAVY price for some measly change.

Romy Batester, of Agoncillo Street, Ermita, Manila, was stabbed dead with his own knife after he allegedly tried to extort P5 from a jeepney dispatcher in Sta. Ana, Saturday.

Police said Batester demanded P5 from Manuel Lapuz Jr., 41, at about 2:45 p.m. but the latter refused.

Irked, Batester reportedly pulled out a knife and tried to stab Lapuz. However, Lapuz managed to grab the knife and drive it into Batester's side. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

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Shari'ah lawyer reported abducted

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HE WAS eating grilled fish when they came and took him away.

On Friday night, more than 20 men with rifles and handguns barged into a crowded neighborhood in Barangay Culiat, Quezon City, and reportedly took Ustadz Faisal Baharan.

Until yesterday afternoon, relatives and neighbors could not find Baharan, 35. He is a Shari'ah lawyer and a teacher at a madrasah at the Salaam Mosque Compound in Culiat.

He arrived in Metro Manila about a year ago to prepare for and take the bar exams.

"We suspect that either the police or the military is behind this," said Assalam party-list group president Pendatun Disimban during a press conference yesterday.

Nowhere to be found

Disimban said his party checked with the National Capital Region Police Office if it had Baharan arrested but Director Avelino Razon Jr. told them it did not.

Witnesses heard some of the men say "*Taga*-NBI *kami* (We're from the NBI)."

But Assalam also checked with the National Bureau of Investigation and got nothing.

In an interview, Central Police District director Nicasio Radovan told the INQUIRER that they did not arrest Baharan.

However, Radovan said a unit from the Army had informed the CPD's Tactical Operations Center that it would be conducting an operation in Quezon City.

The unit was part of the Army's intelligence and security group.

Not even in Bonifacio

But relatives of Baharan who went to Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio said the military unit denied having the lawyer.

"We will continue looking for him in all detention centers. He is innocent," Disimban said.

Jun Alonto, 32, was standing next to Baharan when the men carrying guns came about 8:45 p.m. Friday.

He said Baharan was eating grilled fish in front of a store.

"Suddenly, several armed men pushed me. When I looked back, they had taken (Baharan) away," Alonto said.

Baharan's cousin SPO1 Samad Baharan said some of the men pointed their guns at his house before dragging his cousin "like an animal."

Disimban accused government of indifference toward Muslims.

BF says he will not quit MMDA

NO WAY.

That was the response of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando to groups seeking his resignation.

Several transport and urban poor groups are clamoring for Fernando to step down, claiming that his programs were antipoor and oppressive.

But Fernando, saying he has a "one-track mind," is firm in implementing his maverick projects.

"No spear or cannon will stop me from doing what I think is right," Fernando dramatically said on his radio show yesterday.

He has been intent on bringing order to the roads of Metro Manila. *Irene C. Perez*

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Phone Pals down Kings, knot series

GAME WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
7:30 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Barangay Ginebra (*Game 5, best-of-seven Finals*)

By June Navarro

TALK 'N Text simply watched Barangay Ginebra self-destruct last night and evened up matters in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup Finals with a come-from-behind 90-85 win before a sellout crowd at the Araneta Coliseum.

Willie Miller and Yancy De Ocampo struck on two nifty passes by Jimmy Alapag that highlighted a 10-2 down-the-wire run as the Phone Pals tied the best-of-seven series at 2-2.

Miller canned a three-pointer and the 6-foot-9 De Ocampo laid up off Romel Adducul as the Phone Pals overhauled an 11-point deficit to take the lead for good at 87-83 with less than a minute to play.

Mark Caguioa shot a series-high 43 points but the Kings suddenly fell flat in the clutch, missing their last three attempts from the field and committing a couple of turnovers.

And Eric Menk was an eyesore on the free throw line as the Most Valuable Player of the conference flubbed his last four charities, including a pair that was followed by Miller's killer triple.

"To even up the series was our goal," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal, who received the perfect gift from the Phone Pals on his 47th birthday.

"Game 5 is almost the finale of the championship. Whoever wins Game 5 has an advantage for the rest of the series," he added.

Miller scored 25 of his team-high 29 points in the second half while Alapag and Mark Telan added 14 points each to offset Caguioa's hot night.

Menk finished with 10 points and 16 rebounds in an almost no-relief job for the Kings, who dominated the Phone Pals off the boards, 64-39, but committed 24 turnovers as against Talk 'N Text's eight.

Ginebra, which led by 77-66 early in the last quarter, also blew 12 of 23 free throws overall.

Caguioa hit five three-pointers out of eight attempts and scored 22 points alone in the first half to compensate for an anemic performance in Game 3.

"Willie (Miller) embarrassed me in that game and I don't want him to do it again," said Caguioa.

The scores:

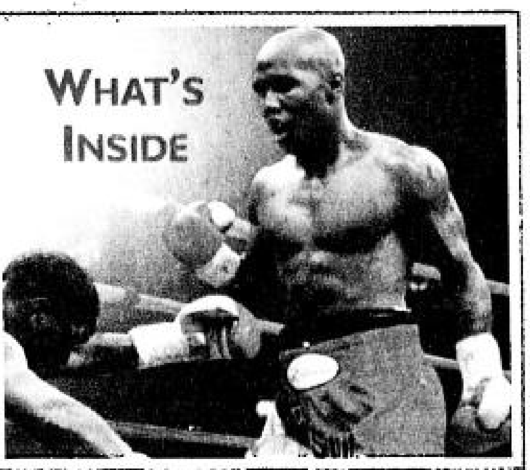
TALK 'N TEXT 90—Miller 29, Alapag 14, Telan 14, Pablo 13, De Ocampo 11, Gelig 4, Belano 3, Camaso 2, Salansang 0, Ravena 0, Fran 0.

GINEBRA 85—Caguioa 43, Menk 10, Dimaunahan 8, Adducul 8, Salvacion 6, Santos 6, Seigle 4, Valenzuela 0, Wallkvist 0, Noble 0.

Quarters: 19-26, 41-47, 61-70, 90-85

More PBA stories on A26

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Sharapova halts Davenport reign /A28
■ Judah halts Spinks, takes welter title /A30



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Compiled by L. Manguiat

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Super Bowl XXXIX; 7 a.m. (r-8:30 p.m.); ESPN and Sports Plus—Find out if the New England Patriots can clinch their third Super Bowl title or if the Philadelphia Eagles win their historic first crown.

BASKETBALL: NBA—Clippers vs Sixers; 8:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports - LA's other team travels to the City of Brotherly Love.

US NCAA—Pittsburgh vs West Virginia; 12 noon (r); Notre Dame vs Syracuse; 2 p.m. (r); ESPN - Take another look at these Big East encounters.

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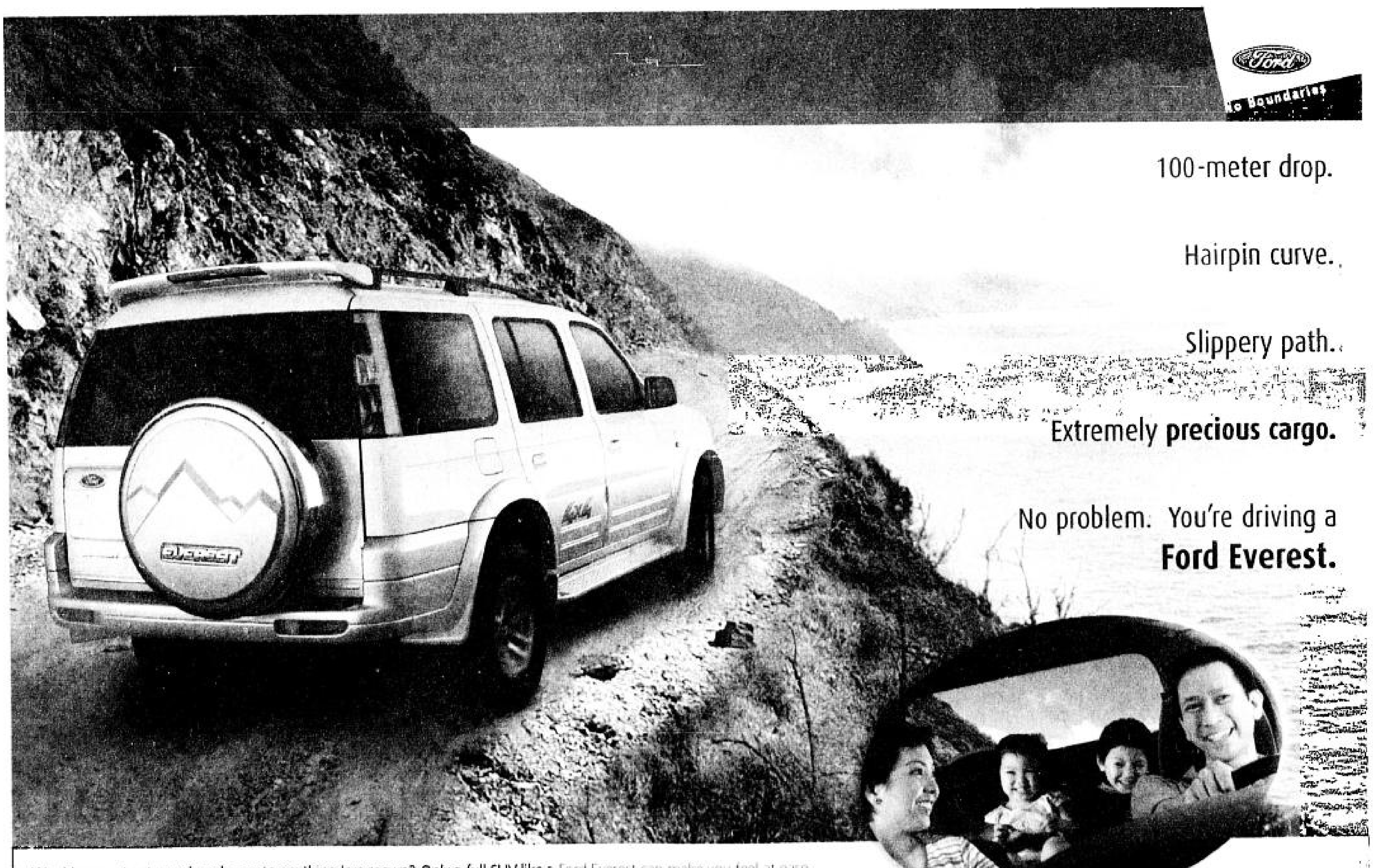

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Draw Date : Jan. 3, 2005
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Mr. Timoteo Molleno Jr., Sultan Kundarat
Samsung V50 Digital Camera
Ms. Marissa Corong, Manila
Samsung HD938 DVD Player
Mr. Albencio Tayo, Q.C.
Magic Sing
Mr. Mario Taguran, Romblon
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Tigresses storm past PSC rivals

By Musong R. Castillo

TAUNTED in the latter part of the eliminations, Santo Tomas came up with a statement game for Philippine Sports Commission yesterday and barged into the finals of the Shakey's V-League after a 25-18, 25-19, 25-19 victory that was full of conviction.

"My players simply showed who they really are," said Santo Tomas coach August Sta. Maria after steering his Tigresses to a second straight championship series appearance with a 2-0 sweep of the Lady Legends.

Santo Tomas is in the finals in all of the first two tournaments of this fledgling league, getting the goods from Mary Jean Balse this time when Roxanne Pimentel was held in check.

The Tigresses humbled the Lady Legends for the fourth straight time here, but none as quick and easy as this one fashioned out in just over an hour before an animated crowd at the Rizal Coliseum.

Balse, the first conference MVP, scattered 26 points, 22 of them coming off kills as Pimentel, one of two reinforcements for UST along with setter Rubie de Leon, struggled with only 13.

PSC coach Tats Suzara had openly expressed his preference to meet the Tigresses in the Final Four, citing the fact that he matched up well with Santo Tomas.

Their first three games, counting Game 1 of the semis, all went the full five-set route, and many of those who watched yesterday awaited a PSC awakening.

They were disappointed.

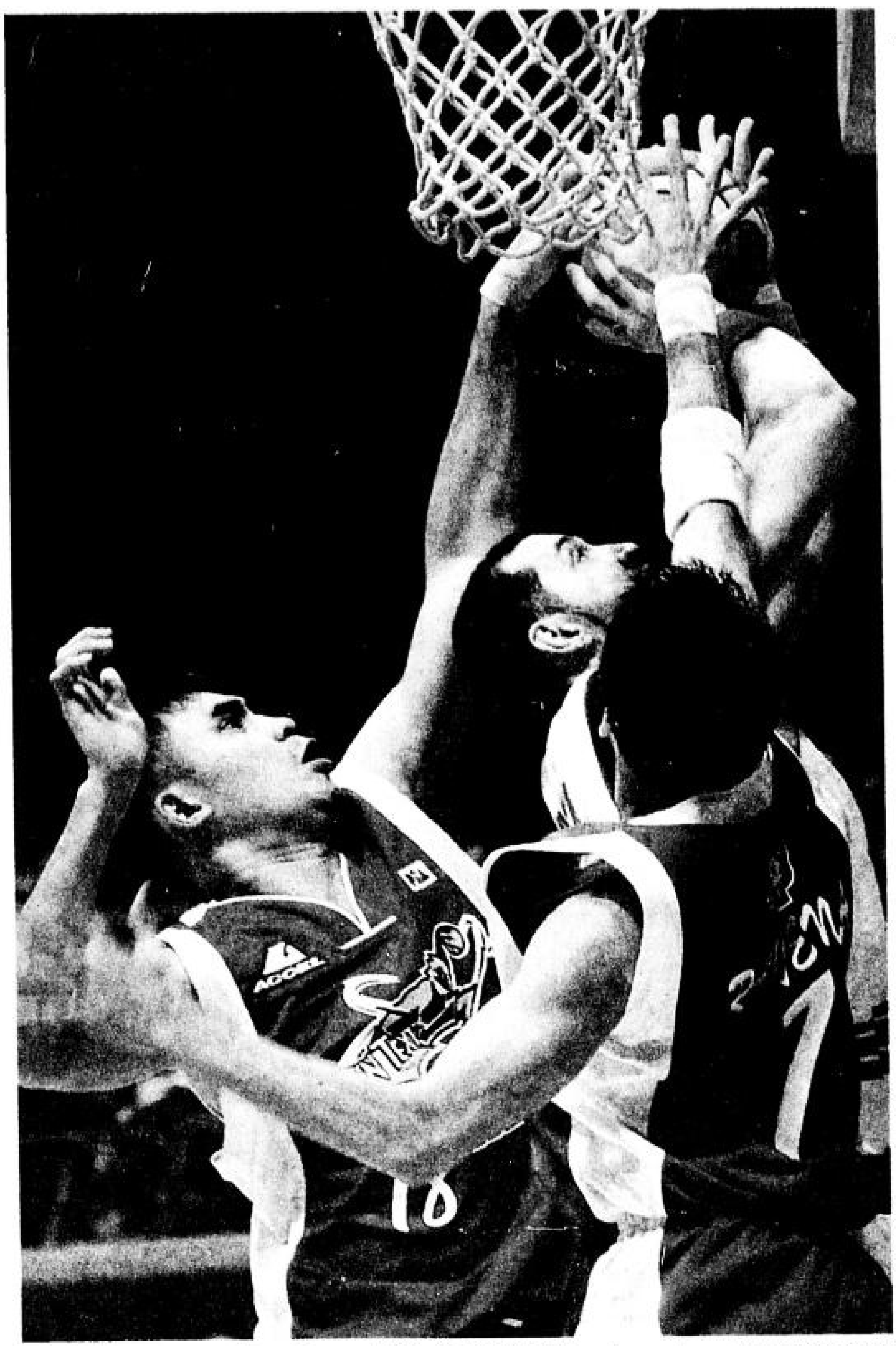
The Tigresses broke out of the gates hard and did not give the Legends the leeway as De Leon and Pimentel combined for another seven points off blocks.

Only Amelia Guanco finished in double digits for the Legends with 12.

Santo Tomas will await a Finals' foe after Letran turned the tables on the highly favored La Salle Lady Archers, 14-25, 22-25, 25-19, 25-13, 15-11, in the second game.

The Lady Knights rallied from two sets down, as their defense held and their reception clicked to extend their best-of-three semifinal series to a deciding game at 4 p.m. tomorrow.

Cherry Rose Macatangay scored all but one of her 24 points on kills and she got solid support on the offensive end, especially in the final three sets as Letran won for the first time in four games over La Salle this tournament.



AUGUST DELA CRUZ

YANCY de Ocampo and Bong Ravena (right) of Talk 'N Text thwart an undergoal try by Ginebra's Andy Seigle. The Phone Pals won, 90-85, to tie the PBA Philippine Cup title series at 2-all.

Menk grabs conference player plum

By June Navarro

WHEN somebody wins the player of the conference award, his performance usually takes a dip during the game when the announcement is made.

But not Eric Menk as Barangay Ginebra's tower of strength vowed to play even harder after walking away with the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup player of the conference award yesterday.

"It (award) wouldn't affect anything that I will do tonight (Game 4)," said the 6-foot-6, muscle-bound Menk after capturing his third career player of the conference accolade.

"I will just play my usual game and prevent it from getting into my head," added Menk, offering the award to his teammates, team management, Ginebra coaching staff and their multitude of fans.

Menk, who also won the award in the Fiesta Cup last conference, had accumulated a total of 3,110 statistical points based on statistics and votes coming from the media, players and a four-man league committee.

"Individual awards just reflect the team's success," said Menk, stressing that without team support he wouldn't have earned the recognition anyway.

Menk, who led the statistics department with 430 points, was the runaway choice of the media (1,365 points) and the four-man committee composed of representatives from the Philippine Sportswriters Association, SCOOP, press photographers and ABC-5.

Talk 'N Text's Willie Miller, a far second after compiling 981 statistical points, got the nod of the players with 614 votes over Menk's 515 but failed to convince the media and the four-man committee.

"I'm thankful for the award but I'll be happier if we win the title," said Menk. "We got embarrassed in Game 3 and hopefully we win it tonight (last night) so we'll be in great position to win the championship."

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Feb. 11 - FIRST FIESTA DAY (Friday)	
Hot Air Balloon Flight	05:30 - 07:00
Flag jump	06:00 - 06:15
Sky Diving exhibition	07:00 - 07:30
Micro light Demonstration	07:30 - 08:40
RC Air Show	08:40 - 09:30
Sky diving exhibition	09:30 - 10:00
Aerobatic Exhibition	10:00 - 11:00
Light Airplane Balloon Bursting Competition	11:00 - 13:30
Sky diving exhibition	13:30 - 14:00
X-Air Formation Flying	14:00 - 14:45
AOPA-P Regional Meet	14:00 - 16:00
RC Air Show	15:45 - 16:30
Airplane vs. Motorcycle race	16:30 - 17:00
Ultra-light formation flying	17:00 - 17:20
Hot Air Balloon flying	17:20 - 18:00
Sky Diving Exhibition	14:30 - 15:00
Aerobatic Show	15:00 - 16:00
Airplane vs. Motorcycle race	16:00 - 16:30
RC Air Show	16:30 - 17:15
Hot Air Balloon Flights	17:45 - 18:00
Hot Air Balloon night Glow	18:45 - 19:30
ABS-CBN Concert	18:45 - 23:30

Feb.12 - SECOND FIESTA DAY (Saturday)	
Hot Air Balloon Flight	05:30 - 07:00
Flag Jump	06:00 - 06:15
Aerobatic Show	07:00 - 07:30
Helicopter Flyby and Exhibition	07:40 - 08:30
Departure and Fly-By of Airplane Rally for Baguio	08:30 - 09:30
Ultra light Fly-By	09:30 - 10:20
Radio Control Aircraft Air Show	10:20 - 11:00
Sky Diving Exhibition	11:00 - 11:30
Ultra-light airplane bomb dropping	11:30 - 12:30
Kite Fighting Flying Exhibition	12:30 - 13:30
Arrival of Airplane Rally	13:30 - 14:30

Feb. 13 - THIRD FIESTA DAY (Sunday)	
Hot Air Balloon Flight	05:30 - 07:00
Flag Jump	06:00 - 06:15
Ultra-light aircraft Fly-By	07:30 - 08:00
Aerobatic Exhibition	08:00 - 08:30
RC Air Show	08:30 - 09:30
Helicopter Flying Exhibition	09:30 - 10:00
Missionary HelioSTOL Aircraft Demo	10:00 - 10:30
Sky Diving Exhibition	10:30 - 11:00
Light Airplane Balloon Bursting competition	11:00 - 12:30
Kite Fighting Flying demonstration	12:30 - 13:30
Ultra-Light Flying display	13:30 - 14:30
RC Air Show	14:30 - 15:15
Sky Diving Exhibition	15:15 - 15:45
Aerobatic Display	15:45 - 16:30
Airplane vs. Motorcycle race	16:30 - 17:00
Ultra Light Fly-By	17:00 - 17:30
RC Air Show	17:30 - 17:45
Hot Air Balloon Flight	17:45 - 18:15
Awards Night and Crew Party	19:30

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Repairs on, sorry for the convenience

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

ORIGINALLY, the PBA was, every restless inch, a stowaway.

For the local pro league to happen, a group of exasperated managers had to break away from established disorder.

This was in 1975. The late Emerson Coseteng of Mariwasa led an uprising and declared independence from the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Simple. The core group of club owners banded together and formed the Philippine Basketball Association.

These intrepid basketball people also declared themselves professionals.

***

For starters, they banned the zone defense, perceived as a boring stamp of amateur play.

They also adapted a lot from the National Basketball Association (NBA) of America, forerunner of international pro ball.

Of course, the PBA also formulated its own constitution and by-laws.

For the record, the PBA has since reverted and embraced the zone defense.

The PBA had also been banned from international leagues following its formation.

But it has been sending top players to select international competitions since 1990 after basketball was declared an open league by the Fiba, ruling body of world basketball.

***

Anyway, there's this pesky question: Can the PBA not be touched by the court of law on specific cases?

Is it right for the PBA to behave like a disgruntled kid and shun court orders to maintain what it perceives as proper conduct of the league?

Case in point was the banning of Asi Taulava.

The PBA, through embattled Commissioner Noli Eala, had banned Taulava from rejoining the Talk 'N Text team in the current championship series.

In so doing, the PBA itself had to go through extreme pressure.

It had come to a point where Talk 'N Text nearly bolted the league.

***

That was hardly comforting.

Except maybe for the Ginebra franchise which had to capitalize on the forfeiture of Game 1 to gain initial edge in the best-of-seven crown series.

Eala himself had to visibly suffer after he ruled out the return of Taulava.

Of course, a lot of people were similarly convinced Taulava should've not been allowed to rejoin his team, mainly at the start of the title playoffs.

This sentiment had been fueled by findings from a Senate probe that Taulava had used fake birth papers to legitimize his stint in the PBA.

The DOJ itself had based its deportation order against Taulava on the Senate findings.

***

OK. But, all told, it's not that neat.

There apparently were some legal loose ends in the anti-Taulava ruling.

If not, why was the Talk 'N Text franchise able to secure an injunction from a Quezon City court and even had the gall to field Taulava in Game 1 of the championship series?

The court was definitely not making a fool of itself in demanding a fair, legit share for Taulava.

Anyway, when push came to shove, Commissioner Eala stood on league rules and regulations to totally rule out a Taulava return.

He next got a unanimous backing from the PBA Board to forfeit the Talk 'N Text victory at the start of the championship.

As a reward for his bold stand, the Ginebra-Talk 'N Text title series has also been drawing record crowds at the Big Dome.

***

But, as we headed for Game 4 of the series, it could not be said that everybody was applauding Eala.

The PBA itself had come close to being shattered by the Eala ruling on Taulava.

In fact, Talk 'N Text has vowed to pursue its contempt raps filed against the intrepid PBA commissioner long after the current championship battles.

Yes. This is not the end of woes for Commissioner Eala.

Neither is it the end of the fight for Manny Pangilinan and his legal team.

Eala indeed appears to have gained the upper hand momentarily.

But he did so by resorting to what's urgent and convenient, if not perfectly legal.

So here's a final message: Commissioner Noli Eala must work doubly hard to put up proper safeguards against disorder.

In short, he must start implementing repairs, mainly in the law-and-order framework of the league.

He may also have to hang up this sign outside his PBA office:

Repairs going on, sorry for the convenience.

PBA Jakarta-bound next month

A FANATIC for innovations, the Philippine Basketball Association is set to embark on another novelty in the latter half of the league's 30th season.

For the first time since 1975, Asia's first play-for-pay cage loop will bring its games to at least 24 provincial destinations and cities apart from a pair of overseas matches being mulled to stretch out the PBA's reach to fans abroad.

"I'm proud to announce that the board has officially approved the first international game of the PBA on top of the 24 provincial games already calendared," said league commissioner Noli Eala.

Jakarta, Indonesia, has agreed to host the PBA's first-ever overseas match pitting the Shell Turbo Chargers and the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals on March 6, just two days after the start of the Reinforced Conference.

Eala said the Shell-Talk 'N Text game is the result of a tie-up between the pro league and the Indonesian Basketball League, which has been trying to replicate the success of the PBA.

"But it will not stop there. We are also planning to hold games in Hong Kong and in the Middle East to cater to Filipinos working overseas," said Eala.

Far-flung areas which the PBA failed to reach in the past will be on top of its priorities and will make up most of the 24 out-of-town sorties the league is mapping out.

"Of course, security is a primary concern in these areas, especially in Mindanao," said Eala, adding that provincial games in Luzon will offer double-headers.

Not only that, PBA provincial games will be now be held twice a week on Thursdays and Saturdays to give way for the national team, which will hold its practice sessions on Mondays.

Team officials of the 10 PBA ballclubs had agreed to make every Monday of the week as "RP team day" to help the national squad reach its goal of reclaiming its once lofty status in the Asian cage scene.

The pro league had recently signed a four-year agreement with the Basketball Association of the Philippines to form and fund the national team in the hope of making it to the Olympic basketball competition in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. *June Navarro*

Blatter eyes football renaissance in RP

Blames basketball for decline of 'easiest' sport

BLATTER: Everybody is kicking.

By Isagani Yambot, *Publisher*

ZURICH—The president of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (Fifa) said they would try everything to revive the sport of soccer football in the Philippines.

In a recent briefing here, Joseph S. Blatter, the Fifa president, said that 51 years ago the Philippines was one of the founding members of the Asian Football confederation and was prominent in the Asian football scene.

"But because of the American influence, it became basketball [that is now the No. 1 sport in the country]," he said.

Blatter said soccer football could still be revived in the Philippines.

He cited the example of Panama which was a virtual non-entity in the football world. He said Panama recently defeated Mexico and qualified for a spot in the Youth Football Cup.

Blatter said that now, "there is no sport so universal as football." For instance, he said, India has one billion people and "[almost] everybody there is kicking."

"The game of soccer is the easiest to play and the easiest to understand," Blatter said.

It is also the most important single sport in the world, he said.

Blatter said that there are now six confederations and 205 football associations with more than 250 million players, of whom 40 million are women and girls.

Exactly 99.8 percent are amateurs and only .2 percent are professional players. Eighty percent of the players, he said, are young people.

Blatter said football "is now a good product. It has an audience of four billion people on TV."

To bring football to the masses, the price of general admission to the World Cup in Barcelona has been brought down to 10 euros.

"We are not making money on admission, we'll make money on TV," he said.

He said that the Brazilian team, one of the strongest in the world, would play in Hong Kong to further promote the sport in Asia.

The Brazilian team has won the World Cup five times; Italy and Germany, three times each; Argentina and Uruguay, twice each, and England and France, once each.

Prieto-Papa tandem clinches Yulo Cup crown by a whisker

MIGUEL Prieto and partner John Papa pooled 166 points to nip the tandems of Chen Cheng Lee-Prospero Noble and Charlie Carmona-Bert Limjuco and rule the 27th Jose Yulo Memorial golf tournament at the north and south courses of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna over the weekend.

The Prieto-Papa pair actually slowed down with a 78 after opening its bid with an 88 but its 166 aggregate proved enough to beat Lee and Noble's 165 (77-88) and Carmona and Limjuco's 163 (84-79) for the overall championship in the annual event held in honor of late Speaker Jose Yulo.

The winning tandem brought home a Pioneer Home Theater System plus trophy, while the Lee-Noble and Carmona-Limjuco pairs settled for JVC DVD Component and Sony Wega CTV21", respectively.

Club manager Rolly Viray flashed his familiarity with the twin courses and teamed up with Hanson So Jr. to run away with the overall low gross honors with a two-day total of 287 (143-144).

Top amateur Juvic Pagunsan likewise dominated the individual low gross competition by firing rounds of 65 and 67 for a 132 aggregate, winning by nine strokes over reigning national and DHL Open champion Jun Bernis, who had 72 and 69 for a 141.

Other winners in the event sponsored by Mitsubishi Motors Phils., Turf Company, Casa Kyla Inc. Century Park Sheraton, Dream Satellite, Frescano, Miramar Fish Company, Pacsports, Pan West Sports Inc., Pro-Line Sports, Sarabia Optical, Seamecor, Virgin Coconut Oil and Wine Direct were Albert See-Adam Armonico (79) and Jorge Yulo-Jun Rojas (77) (low net-north), Gabriel Eala-Arsenic Laurel (79) and Anthony Fujita-Sadamu Fujimoto (84) (low net-south), Par Bains (low net-overall-94), Yojiro Ishii, Jun Sarmiento, Charlie Carmona and Bains (nearest the pin), and the foursome of Hisashi Tesada, Tibs Carandang, Candice Yulo and Boni Pimentel (nearest the line drive).

Felix Yulo won the grand raffle prize of Philips CTV34" plus a Home Theater System, while Tony Manalo and Wolen Superal took home a Sony Home Theater System and Samsung CTV29" with TV rack and DVD player, respectively.

JUVIC Pagunsan corners the individual trophy.

PDI PHOTO

SPORTSWATCH

Key basketball issues at PSA Forum

THE LATEST issues on basketball will be the center of discussion in tomorrow's session of the weekly PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion. Guesting in the 10:30 a.m. forum sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Colors and Pagcor are Eduardo Francisco, lawyer of Talk 'N Text stalwart Asi Taulava, Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) secretary-general Graham Lim and the RP women's team coaching staff led by head mentor Raymond Celis. Games and Amusements Board (GAB) Chair Eric Buhain has also been invited to the session aired live over DZSR Sports Radio. Meanwhile, PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya announced that the association's annual election of officers is set on the third week of February.

Macalla rules MCC non-master chess

ALLAN Macalla upset top favorite Edmundo Gatus of Tondo, Manila in the final round to top purse of the February edition of the Metropolitan Chess Club (MCC) non-master active chess tournament Saturday night at the J&F Divino Building in Quezon City. Macalla finished with 6.5 points, a half point ahead over second-placer Julius Sinangote of Caloocan City, who beat Jerry Areque of Bacolod City. Surigao's Fami Fazon settled for third with 5.5 points after demolishing Rodolfo Panopio of Calamba City. ***Marlon Bernardino, Contributor***

Edaniol sustains win streak

LITTLE-KNOWN Gina Edaniol defeated erstwhile co-leader Rhejean Dableo to grab the solo leadership with a perfect 4-point score after the fourth round of 2005 MCC Amateur Ladies Chess Tournament yesterday in Quezon City. Enerose Magno of San Carlos City, Pangasinan took the scalp of another UP standout, Arriane Aguja of Cavite, to climb to solo second place with 3.5 points. Dableo was stuck at 3 points along with Aileen Riza Caños of Iloilo, Christy Bernales and Shirley Cua of Quezon City.

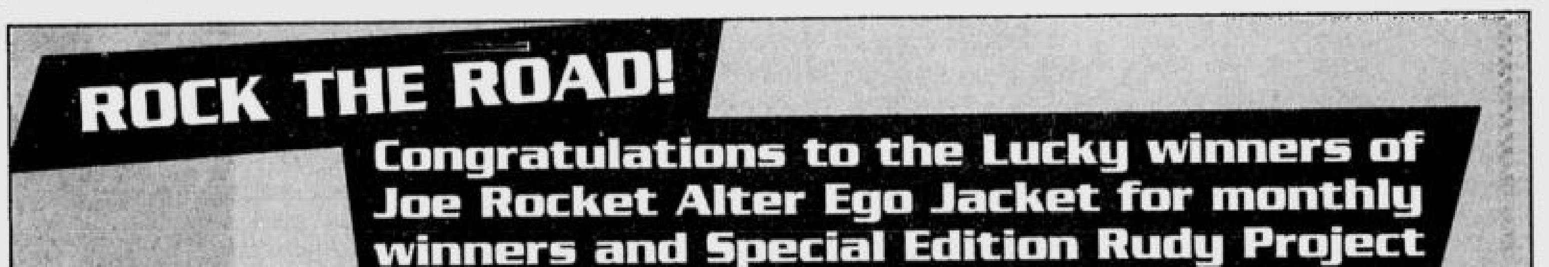
Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Roligon Anniversary Derby semis up

THE SEMIFINALS of the P4M Roligon 15th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby is set today with 73 entries bidding to gain the final round. Fights start at 12 noon. The 4-cock championship takes center stage on Feb. 9. The derby champion will bring home no less than P1.5 million. Highlight of the finals is the fight for the fastest championship win in which a 3-door imported 280 Pajero is up for grabs. Meanwhile, the Filipino Cockers and Breeders Association will hold the 3rd Leg of their Filcoba Derby Circuit on Feb. 16 with Nanding Diaz, Benny Lado, lawyer Virgilio Manguerra and Manny Tabique as hosts.

GCAP derby gets going today

LOYAL followers of big-time cockfighting can expect non-stop and exciting fights as the much-awaited Gentleman Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby gets going today at the fully air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Today's 3-cock elimination round will feature top rated and familiar entries of the likes of Gov. Ito Ynares, Jet Fernando, Patrick Antonio, Sonny Lagon, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Rudy Albano, Boy Royo and Pol Estrellado, Tony Faustino, Pepito Ngo and Rudy Salud. Meanwhile, coliseum manager Alex Tobias announced that regular cockfights are scheduled at LPC from Monday to Sunday. An average of 45 fights is being staged per day, said Tobias.



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zoompromo

12th Weekly winners
Feb. 4 Draw:

1. Vincent Lawrence Jose
Baguio City
2. Roy J. Pabingwit
Ozamiz City
3. Allain Lait
Balintawak, Quezon City
4. Jame Bruss Ongue
Cebu City
5. Jimmy Aquino
Quezon City

3rd Monthly winners
Feb. 4 Draw:

1. Marlon R. Nepomuceno
Taytay, Rizal
2. Joseph R.Concepcion
Obando, Bulacan
3. Carlito Sablan
Concepcion, Tarlac

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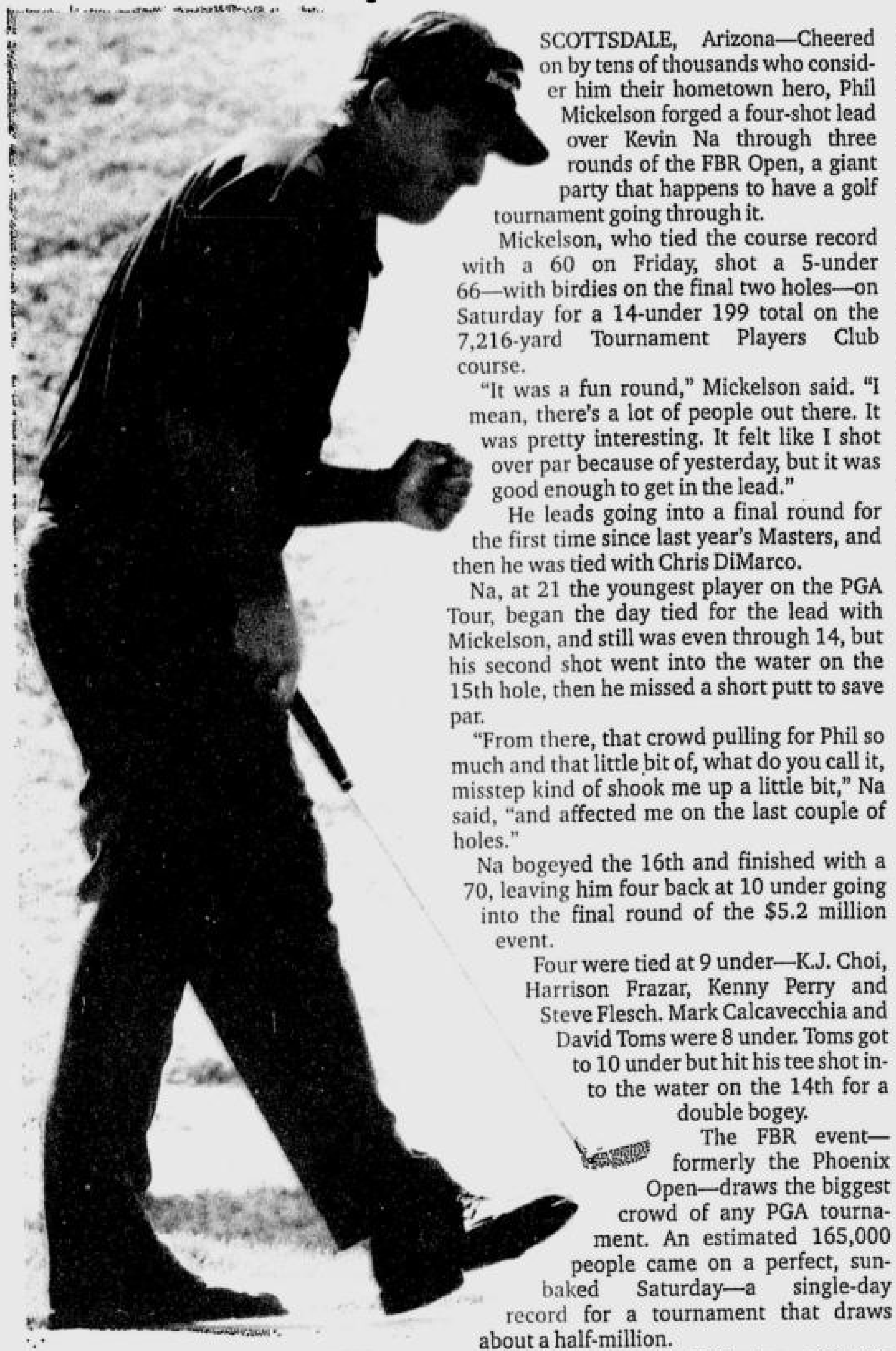
SOLAR INTERACTIVE

Homeboy Phil takes 4-shot lead



DESPITE shots 'worthy of a boo,' Phil Mickelson manages to take the lead and do a little fist-pumping on the side. AFP

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona—Cheered on by tens of thousands who consider him their hometown hero, Phil Mickelson forged a four-shot lead over Kevin Na through three rounds of the FBR Open, a giant party that happens to have a golf tournament going through it.

Mickelson, who tied the course record with a 60 on Friday, shot a 5-under 66—with birdies on the final two holes—on Saturday for a 14-under 199 total on the 7,216-yard Tournament Players Club course.

"It was a fun round," Mickelson said. "I mean, there's a lot of people out there. It was pretty interesting. It felt like I shot over par because of yesterday, but it was good enough to get in the lead."

He leads going into a final round for the first time since last year's Masters, and then he was tied with Chris DiMarco.

Na, at 21 the youngest player on the PGA Tour, began the day tied for the lead with Mickelson, and still was even through 14, but his second shot went into the water on the 15th hole, then he missed a short putt to save par.

"From there, that crowd pulling for Phil so much and that little bit of, what do you call it, misstep kind of shook me up a little bit," Na said, "and affected me on the last couple of holes."

Na bogeyed the 16th and finished with a 70, leaving him four back at 10 under going into the final round of the $5.2 million event.

Four were tied at 9 under—K.J. Choi, Harrison Frazar, Kenny Perry and Steve Flesch. Mark Calcavecchia and David Toms were 8 under. Toms got to 10 under but hit his tee shot into the water on the 14th for a double bogey.

The FBR event—formerly the Phoenix Open—draws the biggest crowd of any PGA tournament. An estimated 165,000 people came on a perfect, sun-baked Saturday—a single-day record for a tournament that draws about a half-million.

"Awesome, isn't it?" Mickelson said. "Every year here is an amazing experience for all the players because of how many people we get here. You know, we average 40,000 or 50,000 on the tour, and here we had 165,000. This is amazing."

Practically every one of the revelers was cheering on Mickelson.

"He's the desert son," Flesch said, "and that's the way it should be."

Mickelson took a two-shot lead on the par-3, 162-yard 16th, acknowledged as the most raucous hole in golf. An estimated 7,000 fans crowd around the bowl-shaped hole.

They did the "wave" for five rotations as Mickelson approached, then chanted "Master's Champ!" and "A-S-U!" for the golfer who was a three-time US college champion at Arizona State University and lived in Scottsdale for many years before moving to Rancho Santa Fe, California, in December of 2001. A group of fans wore green jackets in honor of Mickelson's long-awaited Masters triumph a year ago.

The rowdy bunch are known to boo bad shots, but mostly they refrained when Mickelson's tee shot sailed into the bunker left of the green.

"It was worthy of a boo," Mickelson said.

Na, meanwhile, made the green but was far from the pin, and the boos rang out, along with chants of "Sha-na-na-na, hey, hey, goodbye."

Na proceeded to three-put for a bogey, and Mickelson sank the 12-footer to save par as the crowd erupted.

"You can't describe the feeling from a player's standpoint to have that many people around one hole and you get a good shot or make a good putt," Mickelson said.

Mickelson followed with a birdie on the par-4, 332-yard 17th, where he had an eagle on Friday, then capped his round with a birdie before a huge throng on the par-4, 438-yard 18th.

Mickelson had six birdies, and his first bogey since the first round.

Na stayed with Mickelson most of the afternoon and took the lead with a birdie that put him to 12-under on the 11th hole. But he bogeyed the next hole to drop back even.

"You know, I was right up there putting pressure on Phil," Na said. "I was ahead of him. I caught a few bad breaks coming in. I'm very happy that I made that last putt to stay in the last group. I'm still in this tournament. I'm four back. A great round tomorrow can do it, finish it off." *AP*

NEW YORK'S Stephon Marbury (3) applies a head lock on Phoenix Suns gua
fourth quarter of their NBA game in Phoenix, Arizona.

Parry holds off Els, bags Heineken crown

MELBOURNE, Australia—Australia's Craig Parry ended Ernie Els' three-year hold on the Heineken Classic title Sunday, holing a 12-foot birdie putt on the fourth hole of a playoff with countryman Nick O'Hern.

After Parry made his birdie putt on the fourth extra hole, the 18th, O'Hern missed a 10-foot birdie attempt to end the tournament at historic Royal Melbourne.

Parry made par-saving putts on the first three playoff holes—the 18th twice and then the 17th, while O'Hern helped keep the playoff going by missing birdie putts inside 10 feet on the two opening holes, again the 18th.

"I never thought I'd have a chance to win when Nick had those putts from so close," said Parry. "But as we all know, some days they just won't go in."

Parry closed with a 1-under 70 to match O'Hern (71) at 14-under 270.

Parry's most memorable playoff performance came last March in the Ford Championship at Doral in Florida when he holed a 6-iron shot from 160 meters (176 yards) for an eagle to win on the first extra hole against Scott Verplank.

"Not quite as dramatic, this one, but pretty good just the same," said Parry.

O'Hern, who injured his right knee last year carrying a baby crib, had arthroscopic surgery after the Australian Masters in December. He pulled out of the Caltex Masters last week in Singapore because his knee was still bothering him.

"It was very frustrating," said O'Hern, playing his first tournament in six weeks. "I hit the shots I wanted to hit in the playoff and made the putts I wanted to make. But the ball wouldn't go into the hole."

"Craig made his putts when he needed to. All credit to him. I played my heart out today but it just didn't happen."

Els shot a 70 to finish at 12 under, two shots out of the playoff. He had three bogeys on the back nine, including the 18th.

Cancer survivor Jarrod Lyle, a 23-year-old Australian, bogeyed the 18th to tie for third with England's Simon Dyson at 13 under. Lyle, who spent a year in hospital undergoing chemotherapy for leukemia in 1999, shot a 71, and Dyson had a 68.

"It was all pretty much a blur," said Lyle, who broke into tears during a television interview. "I was so happy I was able to take on the whole field for so long."

Scotland's Colin Montgomerie (71) tied for 11th, six shots back.

Els got to within one stroke of the lead after sinking a 25-footer for birdie on the sixth, a hole he had bogeyed three previous times this week.

From there, his round was inconsistent. From just in front of the green for two on the par-5 ninth, he left his chip short, then missed a four-foot birdie putt.

He bogeyed the 10th, birdied the par-3 11th, then bogeyed the 12th after a bad chip. *AP*

CRAIG Parry punches the air after sinking a birdie putt to win the Heineken Classic. AFP

Nicklaus hits

WAILEA, Hawaii—Jack Nicklaus returned from a long layoff following back surgery to take the Champions Skins Game, winning 11 straight skins and a career-high $340,000 in a runaway victory over Craig Stadler.

Nicklaus, who turned 65 last month and hadn't played a competitive round of golf for months, rode on the back of a cart for much of Saturday's round because of a strained hamstring. He had back surgery on Nov. 23.

Stadler, the 2004 Champions Tour player of the year, was second with five skins and $180,000 in his Skins Game debut. Defending champion Tom Watson earned $80,000 for his two late skins, and Arnold Palmer was blanked for the third time in four years.

Nicklaus, also the 1991 winner, sealed the victory in the made-for-TV tournament by holing a 14-foot birdie putt—his third straight birdie—for $40,000 on the 548-yard No. 15th. On the previous hole, Nicklaus hit a spectacular 6-iron to set up a 4-foot birdie putt for five skins and $170,000.

The 51-year-old Stadler, the youngest in the group, set the pace early by outdriving his competition. He birdied three of the first four holes to take four skins and $80,000. With four skins and $100,000 on the line on the par-3 eighth, Stadler had a

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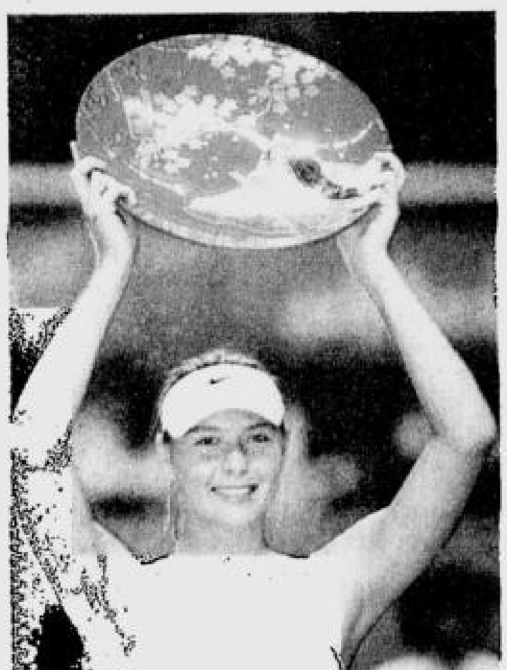
Sharapova halts Davenport reign



SHARAPOVA: Hot in Japan. AFP

TOKYO—Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova claimed the Pan Pacific Open final Sunday by defeating top ranked Lindsay Davenport in a tiebreaker.

Second-seeded Sharapova captured her first Pan Pacific title and snapped Davenport's four-tournament winning streak here after a hard fought, 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (5), win at Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium.

"I'm very happy to have won," the Russian teenager said. "Lindsay played an amazing match and it all came down to the tiebreaker, so obviously it was a very tough match."

Top-seeded Davenport, who lost to Serena Williams in the final of the Australian Open a week ago, took a medical time out after the first set and came back to take the momentum despite a sore left thigh.

She produced 13 aces Sunday but couldn't keep up with the 17-year-old Sharapova when it mattered most.

"I left the court to get some support on my left thigh," said Davenport. "I just went back out there and tried to keep the points as short as possible. In the tiebreaker, she came up with some great shots and I couldn't run down many balls."

Leading, 6-5, in the tiebreaker, Sharapova won when Davenport couldn't catch up to her forehand return down the line.

Sharapova, who lost in the semifinals of the Australian Open to Williams, also served well in Sunday's final and had nine aces.

"I served well in the first set," said Sharapova, who pocketed the $189,000 winner's check. "But she came out after the break and got a little confidence. It's tough when your opponent serves so well. I served well, too, but it was my return that I was most satisfied with."

Davenport was gunning for her fifth Pan Pacific title, which would have made her the most successful player in the 22-year history of the event. Martina Hingis has also won here four times.

"Maria is a great player," said Davenport. "I'm sure you'll see a lot more of her in the final in the years to come."

Sharapova has a history of winning in Japan. She is the two-time defending champion at the Japan Open.

"I guess this is my lucky place," said Sharapova. "I don't know why but I always seem to play well here."

With Sunday's victory, Sharapova will move up to No. 3 in the WTA rankings, behind Davenport and Williams but said she has no timetable for claiming the No. 1 spot.

"My job is to go out and perform well," said Sharapova. "I have no timetable to become No. 1 in the world. If it happens, it happens." *AP*

Real Madrid, Ma
United overwhel

MADRID, Spain—Vanderlei Luxemburgo led Real Madrid to its sixth straight Spanish league victory Saturday, a 4-0 win over Espanyol, to tie a team record and close to within four points of leader FC Barcelona.

Luxemburgo has won all six league matches since he took over at Madrid in December. He can surpass Luis Carniglia's 1957-58 record if his team beats host Osasuna next weekend.

Raul Gonzalez scored two goals, while Zinedine Zidane and Thomas Gravesen added the others for second-place Madrid.

"The team played happily because it's happy. It's working very well. It's very concentrated but not tense," Luxemburgo said. "To win the league, we need a seventh win and then an eighth. I don't want the players to talk about Barcelona."

International Olympic Committee inspectors watched the match at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, news agency Efe reported. They are in Madrid this week to view the city's bid to host the 2012 Olympics.

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Marino, Young elected to football Hall of Fame

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Quarterbacks Dan Marino, the most prolific passer in NFL history, and Steve Young, the most accurate to throw a ball, were elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Although he never won a Super Bowl, Marino captured every other honor the NFL had on offer in 17 seasons with the Miami Dolphins.

The NFL MVP in 1984, Marino was named All-Pro on three occasions and made nine trips to the Pro Bowl, setting numerous records along the way.

By the time he retired in 1999, Marino held 21 records, including most passing yards (61,361), attempts (8,358) completions (4,967) and touchdown passes (420).

"It's an incredible honor," said Marino. "It's humbling to think of growing up wanting to be a professional football player."

Young began his career in the now defunct USFL and joined the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1985 for two seasons before being traded to the San Francisco 49ers in 1987.

Taking over for another Hall of Fame quarterback, Joe Montana, in 1991, Young led the 49ers to a 49-26 win over the San Diego Chargers in the 1995 Super Bowl, throwing a record six touchdown passes.

The left-handed quarterback was twice honored as the league's MVP and selected All-Pro four times. *AP*

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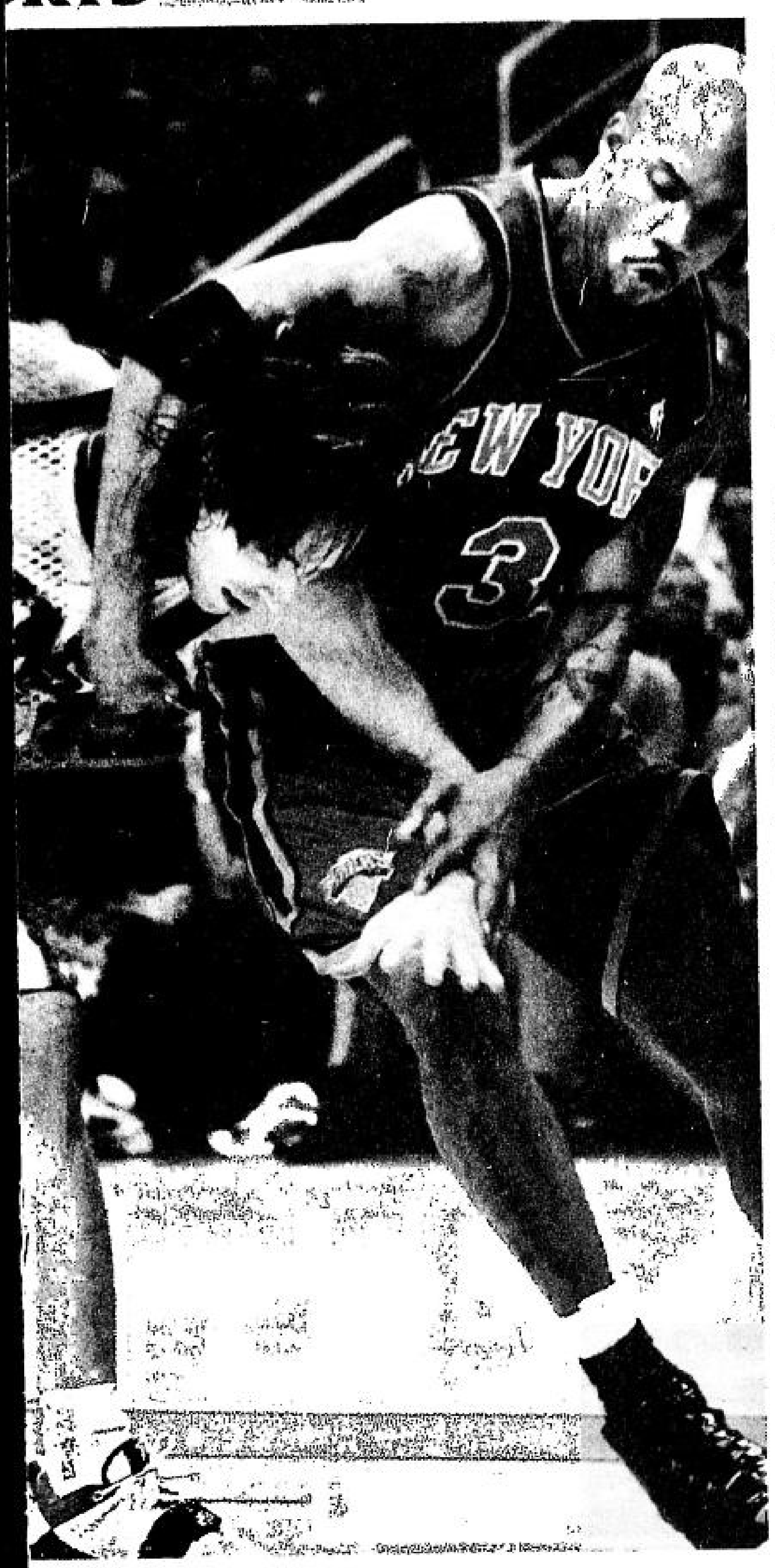

d.Steve Nash (13) in the REUTERS

jackpot

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to win another skin worth

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gave United 56 points, eight
ind leader Chelsea, which
chester City on Sunday. City
team to have beaten the
league this season. *AP*

Carter explodes as Nets spank Pistons

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Vince Carter had his best game since joining the New Jersey Nets, scoring 41 points and leading a second-half surge in a 107-85 victory Saturday that snapped the Detroit Pistons' five-game winning streak.

Carter, who finished 10 points shy of his career high, scored 20 of his points during a 29-9 run bridging the third and fourth quarters that turned a 63-61 edge into a 92-70 lead.

"This was the bar that we had to see how good we are against. We wanted to see where we are as a team, and that was a great effort," Carter said.

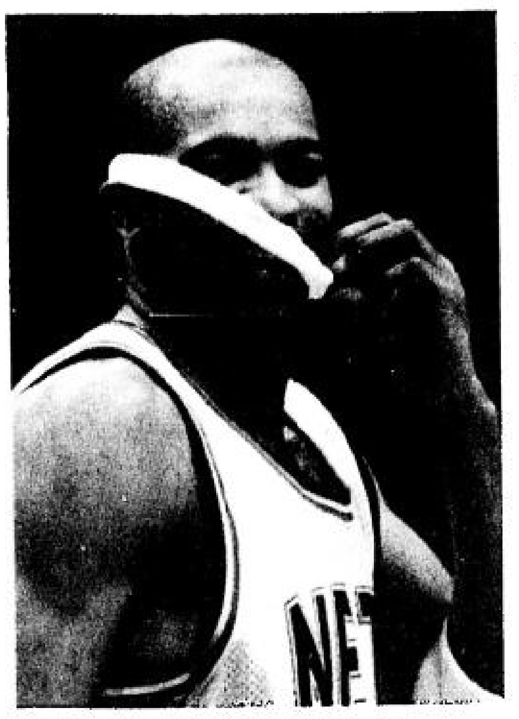
Carter's points were a season high, surpassing the 33 he scored Jan. 19 in a victory over Milwaukee that came 33 days after the Nets acquired him from Toronto. New Jersey has gone 13-13 since the Carter trade.

Jason Kidd added 12 points and 14 assists, surpassing Kenny Anderson as the franchise leader in career assists with 2,364. Kidd also surpassed Bob Cousy (6,955) for 12th place on the NBA's all-time assists list.

"Nothing went right today. We were flat," Pistons forward Tayshaun Prince said. "We managed to cut it to two at halftime, but it was a bad third quarter. We weren't doing what we're supposed to do on defense, and that's what creates chaos."

In Washington, a night after watching his team blow a big lead after he was ejected, Gilbert Arenas had 31 points, nine assists and six rebounds to help the Wizards maul Milwaukee, 112-94, and snap a four-game losing streak.

On Friday night in Toronto, the Wizards blew a 22-point lead in a 103-100 loss. They had a 15-point lead late in the third quarter when Arenas was ejected.



AFTER his best game in a New Jersey uniform, Vince Carter has reason to smile. AP

In Atlanta, Jermaine O'Neal scored 38 points to lead the Pacers over Atlanta, 84-79, for its second straight victory after a six-game losing streak.

O'Neal capped his night with two clinching free throws with 3.3 seconds remaining.

In Cleveland, LeBron James had 30 points and nine assists, and Zydrunas Ilgauskas made two big baskets in the final 1:43 as the Cavaliers beat Orlando, 101-92.

James had 18 points, six assists and four rebounds in the second half.

In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 10 rebounds, and Dwyane Wade scored 25 points to lead the Heat past Chicago, 108-97, for its fifth victory in six games.

In Phoenix, Amare Stoudemire had 32 points and 15 rebounds, and Steve Nash added 26 points and 14 assists to lead the Suns over New York, 114-106.

The victory was the seventh in eight games for the Suns (38-11) and strengthened their lead in the NBA's Pacific Division. It also gave them their first season sweep over the Knicks since 1994-95. They beat the Knicks 133-118 in New York on Jan. 25.

In Denver, Kenyon Martin had 24 points and nine rebounds, and the Nuggets limited high-scoring Jason Richardson to 13 points on its way to a 107-91 win over Golden State.

Carmelo Anthony added 18 points to help the Nuggets improve to 4-1 under new coach George Karl.

In Salt Lake City, Carlos Boozer scored 18 points, and Andrei Kirilenko and Matt Harpring each had 17 to help the Jazz defeat New Orleans, 108-82, and snap a three-game losing streak.

Raja Bell added 16 points for Utah, which shot 53 percent from the field and led by as many as 28 points after blowing the game open in the third quarter.

In Portland, Oregon, Damon Stoudamire hit a long jump shot and a driving layup in the final minutes to help the Trail Blazers hold off Sacramento, 114-108.

Stoudamire finished with 30 points and eight assists, and Zach Randolph added 28 points and 12 rebounds for the Trail Blazers.

Mike Bibby led the Kings with 35 points. Chris Webber, who missed four games because of a sore left knee, had 20 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 25 points after missing two games because of the flu, leading the SuperSonics past expansion Charlotte, 113-99.

Allen, who only returned to practice Friday, played 31 minutes in the first three quarters and made 9-of-14 shots, including two 3-pointers. *AP*

Road trip will determine Lakers' playoff chances

EL SEGUNDO, California—The number was all but committed to memory—24 of the final 38 games on the road—by the time the Lakers left Saturday to begin a stretch that will go a long way in determining whether their season will stretch into the playoffs.

After three weeks of games at Staples Center, the Lakers will open a five-game trip today in Houston, then continue on to play at Atlanta, New Jersey, Detroit and Cleveland.

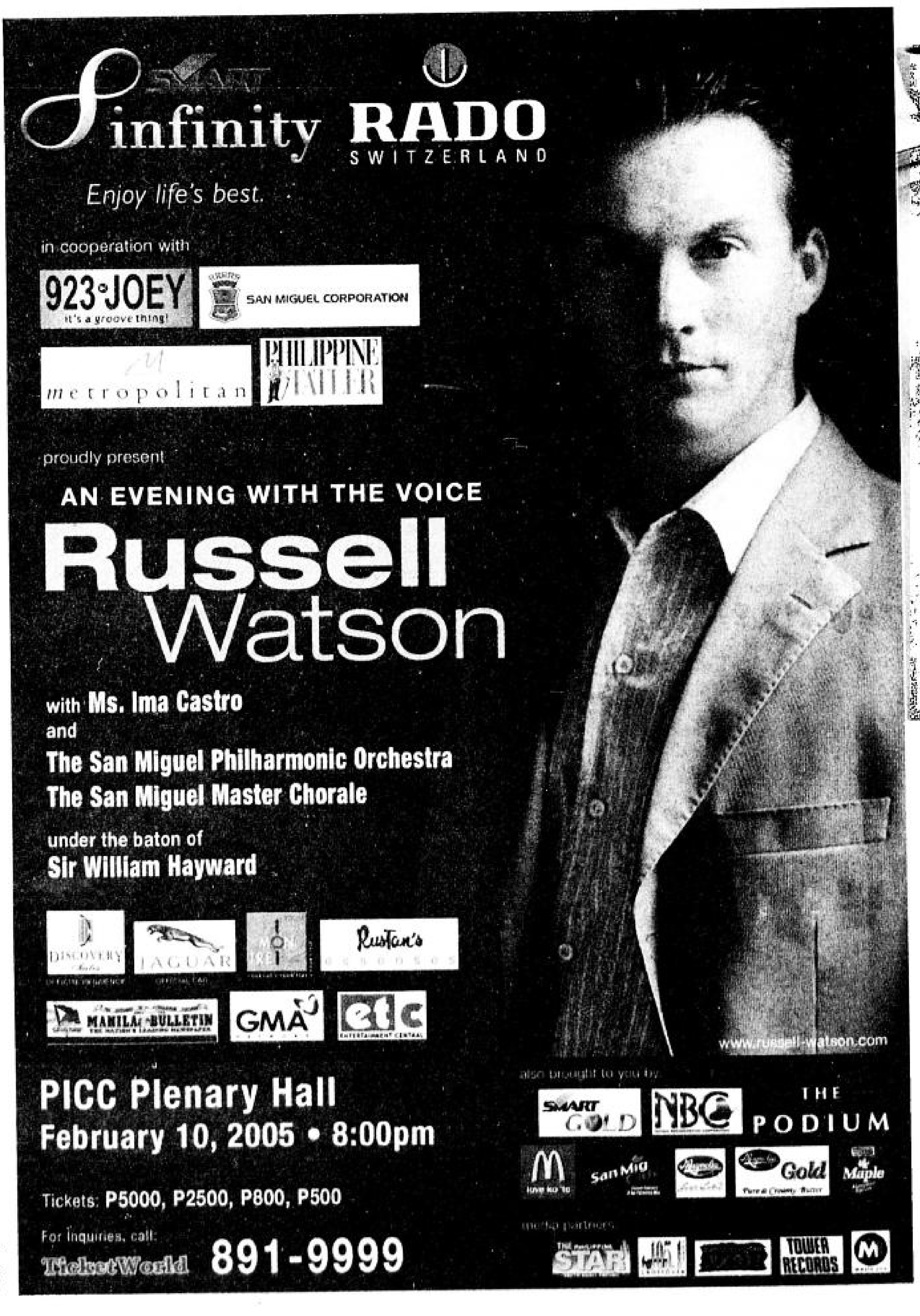
"I think this road trip will really tell us where we're going to head, right before the All-Star break," point guard Chucky Atkins said. "It's a chance for us to steal some games while some other teams may be thinking about the break. And we need wins."

The Lakers entered Saturday in eighth place in the Western Conference standings, which puts them in playoff position, but barely. They have a chance to improve on a 7-10 road record.

All three Lakers on the injured list—Kobe Bryant, Devean George and Vlade Divac—made the trip, albeit with varying degrees of availability.

Bryant hopes to play, although the team has said that is unlikely due to his sprained right ankle. George, meanwhile, suffered a bone bruise in his right foot, and Frank Hamblen said the forward likely wouldn't make his season debut this week.

And Divac said jokingly that he needed to get out of the house, so he took his seat on the Lakers charter plane, and told reporters he was looking forward to seeing New York. *NYT News Service*



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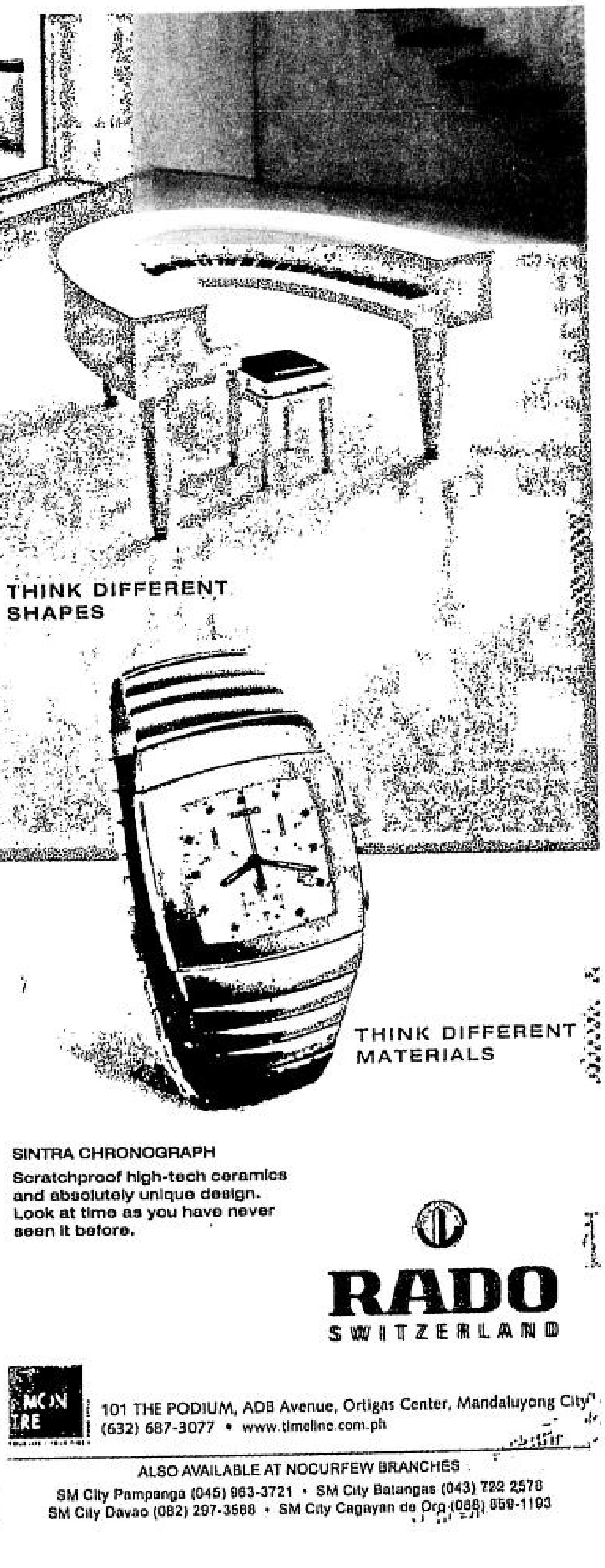

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Santo Tomas sweeps taekwondo crowns

UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas wielded the broom with impunity Wednesday, sweeping the men, women and juniors taekwondo titles of the UAAP Season 67.

Making the sweep even more impressive for coach Dindo Simpao's jins was the fact that Santo Tomas came out unscathed in all its five matches in the men and women divisions, and four matches in the juniors' action.

University of the East retained second place with four wins and one loss—only against the champion team, in the men's division and De La Salle, UST's chief rival for the overall crown, placing runner-up—a vast improvement from its sixth-place finish last season—in the women's contest.

De La Salle wound up third in the men's with three wins and two losses, followed by Far Eastern University at 2-3, Ateneo at 1-4 and University of the Philippines, last year's fourth-placer, finishing in the cellar this time at 0-5.

Rounding out the women's contest were UP (3-2) third, FEU (2-3) fourth, Ateneo (1-4) fifth and UE (1-4) sixth.

As awesome were the UST juniors who survived close 3-2 calls with eventual second-place Ateneo (3-1) and third-placer UE (2-2) in the two-day contest. Fourth in juniors was UP at 1-3 and fifth was La Salle-Zobel at 0-4.

The taekwondo competitions were staged for two days, Saturday and Wednesday, at the UST gym. Competitions in the men and women were in seven divisions, while in juniors, the contests were in five classes.

Ateneo, the defending men's champion, meanwhile, yielded to FEU in a match that went down-the-wire, 1-2, Wednesday, but its grip of first place in football remained solid with a 4-1-1 win-draw-loss record.

Jake Hugo put a dent on Ateneo's armor this season, scoring the marginal goal just before time expired. Matthew Jaucian opened scoring for Ateneo in the 22nd minute, but FEU equalized on Kristian Magbalon in the 38th.

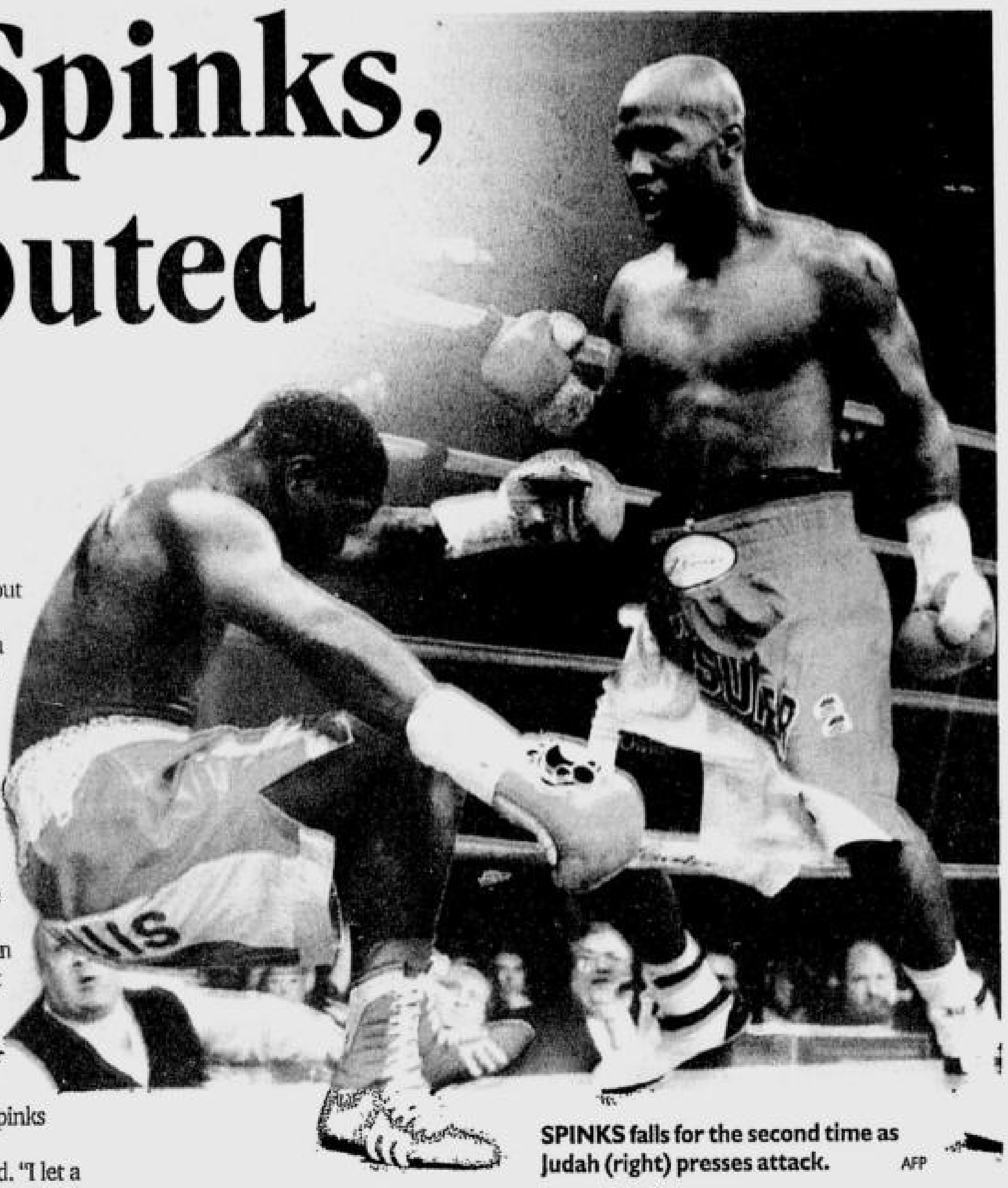
UE and UP ended up in a scoreless draw and UST nipped De La Salle, 1-0, also Wednesday. UST improved to 1-5-0, UP was at 1-4-1, FEU 1-3-2, UE also 1-3-2 and De La Salle 1-2-3.

In women's football Thursday, reigning titlist De La Salle and UST played to a 1-1 draw, keeping the Lady Archers at second place behind idle UP (4-0-0) with three wins, one draw and one loss.

The Lady Eagles nipped the Lady Tamaraws, 1-0, to improve to 2-1-2. FEU now totes a 1-0-4 record, better than UST, which is at the cellar with 0-2-3.

Baseball games Thursday at the Rizal Memorial Stadium saw UP ripping Adamson, 14-2, and NU edging Ateneo, 15-14. UP improved to 5-2, while NU is now 4-3, Adamson 4-3 and Ateneo 1-6.

Judah halts Spinks, takes undisputed welter title


SPINKS falls for the second time as Judah (right) presses attack. AFP

ST. LOUIS—Zab Judah claimed the undisputed welterweight title, beating Cory Spinks in his hometown with a ninth-round technical knockout Saturday night.

Judah lost a unanimous decision to Spinks in April in Las Vegas. He knocked Spinks down in the 12th round of that fight and referred to the rematch as the 13th round, saying he simply ran out of time.

"I was hungry, I was determined," said Judah. "It's my time, it's my era."

Judah was the aggressor throughout this fight, neutralizing the crowd of more than 20,000 that chanted for Spinks, the son of former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, who accompanied his son into the ring.

The fight was stopped at 2:49 of the ninth round, after Spinks was knocked down for the second time. Judah pressed the attack after the first knockdown and avoided Spinks' desperate efforts to tie him up.

Spinks said he had been "groggy" and his corner didn't agree with the decision to stop the fight.

"I had no problem, I was going up the steps to stop it myself," said Kevin Cunningham, Spinks' trainer and manager. "This just wasn't Cory's night."

All three judges had Judah (33-2, 24 knockouts) comfortably ahead when the bout was stopped.

Judah's victory was his third in a row since that April loss to Spinks in Las Vegas, and it paves the way for a deciding third bout, presumably in New York, because Judah is from Brooklyn. Both fighters said they would be interested.

"Oh yeah, I want to fight him again," Spinks said. "This was a good fight. I gave him a chance and I hope he gives me one in return."

The fight was the first major bout in St. Louis in more than 40 years, and it was a sellout, helped by Spinks' large following.

On Friday, Judah said he thought fighting in St. Louis would be an advantage for him and not Spinks because of the potential distractions.

"I'm very disappointed," Spinks said. "I let a lot of people down, but I have to hold my head up. I have to take this like a man."

Judah set the tone from the first round, stalking Spinks while the champion mostly danced. He also staggered Spinks, dropping him to his knees at the bell in the seventh round, but it was not judged a knockdown.

Spinks (34-3, 11 knockouts), sensing he needed a big finish, had a strong start to the ninth round and connected with a big left about 40 seconds in and then followed with a nice right and a combination.

None of it affected Judah, who knocked down Spinks for the first time with about 50 seconds left in the round.

"Spinks did exactly what I thought he'd do," Judah said. "He was running from my left hand, which made him pull back and let me take it to his body." AP

CDSL Baby Griffins cop third place

GAMES TODAY
9 a.m. La Salle vs PMI (women)
10:30 a.m. Olivarez HS vs St. Francis (junior)
12 noon EAC vs CDSL (men)

THE COLEGIO de San Lorenzo Baby Griffins and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Lady Maroons scored scrambling wins yesterday to claim third place in the junior and women's divisions of the 12th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) basketball tournament at the Pasay Sports Complex.

Marlon de la Cruz fired a game-high 17 points in helping the Griffins fuel a late rally and beat Arellano High School, 77-68.

Michelle Pacheco dished out 20 points for the Lady Maroons, who edged the Rizal Technological University Lady Technocrats, 59-52.

Romard Avellana chipped in 14 points and joined hands with De la Cruz in allowing the Baby Griffins to maintain a 40-28 halftime edge.

Niccolo Cabigao unloaded 10 points, with his two triples in the third, widening the Baby Griffins' lead to 16, 59-43.

Baby Griffins coach Johnny Cutaran said the team should have been in the finals, but the Baby Griffins forfeited the match with Olivarez High School when they showed up for the game in the wrong uniform.

Pacheco and Genebeth Ramos strung up 12 points in the last 10 minutes, with Pacheco's two gift shots in the last 1:10 allowing PUP to widen its lead and eventually claim its best finish this season.

Ramos backed up Pacheco with 15 points while Marisse Prado delivered seven.

In today's final match, the Emilio Aguinaldo Generals take on the Colegio de San Lorenzo Griffins in Game 1 of the senior finals at 12 noon.

The scores:

First Game (women)

PUP 59—Pacheco 20, Ramos 15, Prado 7, Hormillosa 5, Dacumi 5, Chua 4, Angeles 4, Areno 2, Abella 2.

RTU 52—Ong 26, Reyes 8, Peralta 6, Blancaflor 3, Abacial 3, Binalla 2, Pena 2, Z. Peralta 2, Corral 0.

Halftime: 27-all

Second Game (junior)

CDSL 77—De la Cruz 17, Arellano 14, Cabigao 10, Anduyan 8, Agustin 7, Regala 7, Gran 4, Escubio 4, Mariano 2, Nicolas 2, Cagula 0, Roldan 0.

ARELLANO 68—Ordonez 12, Umandap 12, Arroyo 11, Ko 7, de la Cruz 7, Cifra 5, Villalobos 5, Caasi 3, Reyes 2, de los Santos 2, Conchas 2, Yee 1, Perez 0.

Halftime: 40-28.

Madrid confident of 2012 Olympic bid

MADRID, Spain—Leaders of Madrid's 2012 Olympics bid are unfazed that Paris is considered the frontrunner for the games, stressing that the race isn't over yet.

"There is a long way to go, things may change. The jury is still out and we believe we have the best project," said Madrid 2012 chief executive Feliciano Mayoral on Saturday. "We will not be frustrated whatever decision is given by the IOC, but we are competing and we think we will win."

Mayoral spoke at the end of the third day of a visit by International Olympic Committee inspectors to evaluate the city's bid.

The 13-member panel finishes its visit on Sunday. It will next visit London (Feb. 16-19), followed by New York (Feb. 21-24), Paris (March 9-12) and Moscow (March 14-17).

The IOC's 100-plus members will select the 2012 host city in Singapore on July 6.

For the third day running, Madrid organizers claimed the inspection trip had been an error-free success so far.

Commission members are not due to give their opinion until Sunday.

"All this time a lot of people have asked if it was good for Madrid to be the first city to be visited," said Madrid Deputy Mayor Manuel Cobo. "Today, I can say that I think it was very good. I think we have set a very high standard that will be very difficult to surpass."

Mayoral said the IOC panel was shown that, if necessary, Madrid had the facilities to stage the Olympics today. Asked how the commission felt on seeing proposed sites that were nothing more than wastelands, such as the proposed Olympic Village, he countered: "This is the city where they will have to put their imagination to work the least."

Madrid 2012's biggest boast is that it offers a compact Olympics with 70 percent of the facilities already built or in the works. It claims 90 percent of the facilities will be finished by 2008. *AP*

Pinoy Gerongco loses by TKO

GERONGCO blows WBF title bid.

Salven L. Lagumbay *Contributor*

DANIEL Hoskins of Australia stopped Filipino Rolando Gerongco in the 10th round Saturday to win the vacant WBF Pacific junior lightweight title in front of a capacity crowd at the Sawtell RSL Club in NSW North Coast Australia.

After knocking down the fighter from Cebu in the ninth round, Hoskins again had Gerongco on queer street, forcing the Filipino's corner to throw in the towel after two minutes and four seconds of the 10th.

Both fighters started with big flurries until Hoskins landed a right cross to the chin that sent Gerongco down.

The Filipino Gerongco was getting on top of Hoskins in the second round until the referee Craig Waller deducted one point from him for continuing to hit after the call of break.

It was a war from there until the Filipino lost steam.

The second bout saw Australia's Justin Clements take out New Zealand's Willy O'Neill in one minute 56 seconds of round 6 to win the WBF Asia Pacific light heavyweight title.

Puyat fits billiards to a T

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I SALUTE First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for tapping Aristeo "Putch" Puyat to serve as billiards "godfather" in this year's Southeast Asian Games. The choice is truly commendable because Putch is second to none when it comes to the promotion and development of billiards in the Philippines.

Since the 1980s, Putch and his elder brother, former assemblyman Jose "Popit" Puyat, have been the country's billiards benefacors, the moving spirit behind Puyat Sports, a nonprofit organization which helps and develops Filipino pool players among them the fabled Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and reigning world champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan.

Putch belongs to a rare breed. Although born to a prominent family, there is no upper-class snottiness in him. Instead, he has a common touch, a pleasant personality, good manners and a well-modulated voice. He is also a sharp dresser like his late uncle Eugenio "Gene" Puyat, the former amateur boxing president who produced the Philippines' first Olympic silver medal winner in boxer Anthony Villanueva (1964 Tokyo Games).

A noted horse owner and breeder, Putch is a longtime president of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners. "My first love is horse racing," said the Marho head in an interview, adding he wasn't keen on billiards before and admitting he was not even a good player.

Still, he played a key role by providing not only the financial support to his stable of pool players but also acting as a second father to the players, most of whom were school dropouts, by helping them chart their career, guiding them in handling their earnings and teaching them how to dress properly and conduct themselves during tournaments.

The billiards boom in the Philippines started in the early eighties when Jose "Amang" Parica, now based in the United States, Reyes and Bustamante dominated the scene, scoring one major victory after another in the lucrative American circuit.

Reyes, also called "The Magician" in pool circles, elevated billiards to its present position of respect and recognition when he won the coveted US Open in 1994 and the prestigious World Pool 9-Ball Championship in Cardiff in 1999. Reyes, now 50 years old, recently scored a rare double victory in the 2005 Derby City Classic, winning the 9-Ball Division and the One 'Pocket category in Louisville, Kentucky.

This year, Reyes, Bustamante and Pagulayan will lead a star-studded Philippine team that will see action in the SEA Games together with 2003 Vietnam SEAG two-gold medal winner Lee Van Corteza of Davao City, snooker champion Marlon Manalo of Mandaluyong City, Cebu City's Warren Kiamco, Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat of Angeles City and battle-tested Leonardo "Dodong" Andam, who is no stranger in the SEA Games having won four gold medals in 1991 when Manila hosted the biennial meet. They will also strut their stuff at the Metropolis Mall in Alabang on Feb. 21-27.

***

FROM THE MAILBOX. Here's Fr. Paul de Vera, OSB, San Beda College, Alabang:

"Reading the sports page is a daily routine. It is one section of the newspaper that doesn't depress nor spoil my day.

"Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had set the direction for our sports leaders when she declared "an Olympic medal" during her term.

"It is a tall order but doable. Our sports leaders must now let go of personal interest and work for a common goal. This is to give meaning to this Chinese proverb: 'Behind an able man there are always other able men.' Teamwork is the heart of great achievements.

"Let us invest on our athletes. They are the ones to do battle in the hard court and in the playing fields to give honor and prestige to our country.

"Our sports facilities have long been neglected. The Rizal Memorial Sports Complex is in a sorry state. It is so sad because this is one place very accessible to many sports enthusiasts. Renovation and reconstruction of sports centers is one priority our present leaders couldn't ignore.

National honor is at stake in the coming 31st Southeast Asian Games. We can't afford to be distracted by an internal squabble. Sports leaders tasked to oversee the success of the Games must work overtime.

"It is a good move to encourage volunteerism especially among the youth. I for one is willing to share my ministry to provide spiritual solace to our athletes. I can be contacted at San Beda College Alabang if such is needed.

"Your perceptive sports column is always a joy to read. Keep on the good work. We draw from your inspiration in quest for excellence. God bless you and your loved ones."

SEA GAMES CUP

Palm It Off rallies to win race

PALM It Off, ridden by jockey Ronald Baldonido, goes from last to first.

JESS YUSON

By Edwin Villanueva, *Contributor*

PALM It Off may be a sluggish starter but when she heats up, she's sure to flash a big finishing kick.

The 5-year-old imported mare from Australia dug hard from dead last to snatch the Southeast Asian Games Cup yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

Learning a neat lesson in their last outing when she came up short over the mile, Ronald Baldonido loosened Palm It Off just at the right spot and the bay galloper simply charged in strongly to collar the faltering leaders at the top of the stretch and score a two-length victory in front of a huge Sunday crowd.

"*Tamang tama ang bitaw kaya abut-abot sila* (I allowed her to rally at the right moment so our rivals proved easy picking)," said Baldonido, a promising apprentice rider.

Starting sixth

Palm It Off, sired by Famous Nick out of Leave, was sixth and last out of the gates, while top pick Adam's Call sprang to the lead with Silver Rose sticking close to give early pressure.

Silver Rose proved to be a big thorn on Adam's Call's side as Pat Dilema was unable to give the Hermie Esguerra entry all the room he needed in front like in their last assignment when Adam's Call won in wire-to-wire style.

The speed duel all but favored Palm It Off, who used the outside lane to pass Winter's Fury, Marque, Sir Golden Score and then the pacesetters to eventually score the come-from-behind triumph.

Palm it Off dropped a heartbreaker to Scrap of Gold in her last outing, losing by half a length also over the one-mile distance, but that gave Baldonido an idea what strategy to apply next for the stayer.

"*Pagsungaw pa lang ng medya milya nag-paremate na ako kaya preskung presko siya* (I started to rouse her nearing the far turn so she looked so fresh for the rally)," added Baldonido.

Fourth win

It was the fourth win in 17 runs so far for the second-favored Palm It Off, who got the P180,000 first prize for the Ubago Stable. Winning time was 1:43 flat (24-24.5-26-28.5).

Sir Golden Score, the longest shot in the field handled by Dominador Borbe Jr., eventually finished second, followed by Marque (MF Daquis), Adam's Call, Winter's Fury (Edwin Orobio) and Silver Rose (JB Hernandez).

As the far second choice in the betting, Palm It Off sold P397,343 out of P1,382,796 in the race sponsored by the Philracom to support the Filipino athletes' participation in the forthcoming Manila SEA Games.

Hussein ends Catubay's OPBF dream

CATUBAY

PHILIPPINE flyweight champion Federico Catubay proved no match for Australia-based Lebanese Hussein Hussein, who used superior firepower and skill to score a third-round knockout in the third of their 12-round fight yesterday at the Panthers World of Entertainment in Penrith, New South Wales, Australia.

The win allowed the tall and rangy Hussein to move closer to another world title shot.

He next faces Mexican hotshot Jorge Arce on March 19 in a WBC flyweight eliminator in the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel.

Hussein had previously challenged WBC flyweight champ Pongsaklek Wongjongkam on Nov. 14, 2003, but lost by unanimous decision to Thailand's finest world champion. Since that loss, Hussein has bounced back with victories over three other boxers.

Hussein proved too classy for Catubay this time, unleashing power shots to finally knock out the Filipino in one minute 59 seconds of the third round. The win also improved Hussein's record to 27 wins, with 21 wins via the short route, against a loss.

Meanwhile, Catubay will have to start all over again to get another crack at international glory.

He will probably defend his RP crown against Edgar Rodrigo, the ex-RP flyweight champ, in his next fight.

Promoter Sammy Gello-ani is also planning to send Catubay abroad for a series of fights. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

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Salvador: Undisputed Jewel of Montaña

By Jasmine W. Payo

MONTAÑA forward Jon Dan Salvador took special satisfaction in beating Welcoat Paints last Saturday.

Playing his usual high-energy game, the brawny forward shot 17 points and grabbed 15 rebounds to power the Jewels within a win of bagging their first title in the PBL Open Championship series.

But perhaps more importantly, Salvador silenced everyone who questioned his heart in winning big games.

"Perhaps I was just too eager in the first two games," said Salvador, the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

After months of playing where virtually everything went right for the 6-foot-4 eager, he suddenly found himself averaging a paltry 6.5 points early in the championship series.

Salvador, though, is no stranger to high expectations. He was already a star player during his high school days in St. Francis and remained a scoring sensation in the collegiate ranks when he joined the St. Benilde Blazers.

In 2000, Salvador was among the key players that powered St. Benilde to its first NCAA championship title.

Thus, everyone wondered why the star forward wasn't playing as good as his record indicated.

Salvador received a lot of flak, but still, his dominating presence carried the Jewels to the Finals.

Considered as one of the league's best post-up players, Salvador averaged 12.9 points and 8.1 rebounds.

So even if many thought that Salvador's performance dipped at the most inopportune time, the league honored the 24-year-old player with the top individual plum.

Inspired, Salvador delivered his most explosive playoff performance.

"I became more focused," he said after the Jewels posted the largest winning margin in the finals series, 77-67. "When I received the MVP award, I was pumped up during the game."

Team leader Alex Compton, who took over the scoring cudgels for the Jewels, agreed that no one deserves the MVP title more than Salvador.

"I can't do what he's doing for the team," noted Compton.

"I've achieved almost everything," said Salvador. "I now have an MVP award, I've won championships in high school and college. So my goal now is to give Montaña the championship."

BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim (center) and Region VIII provincial engineer Neil Baronda shake hands after establishing a BAP office in the Leyte Region. Baronda represented Leyte Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla. At left is BAP regional director Dr. Lucresio Calo.

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1999 Nissan Exalta M/T	360,000.00	12,855.00	**3,857.00**	8,999.00
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Superbowl on TV

SPORTS Plus will air Superbowl XXXIX today at 7 a.m. with the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles clashing in the most-awaited event of the year in the National Football League. Sports Plus and National Sports Grill on Greenbelt 1 will simultaneously host a viewing party where NFL merchandise and other prizes will be raffled off. ESPN will also show the game live.

DYNASTY OR DESTINY?

Patriots, Eagles battle for crown

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Like Janet Jackson's wardrobe malfunction and the decision to put a Super Bowl here, some things just aren't meant to happen.

Such as defending your title with the restraints of the salary cap and freedom of free agency, as New England is on the brink of doing.

Or, for Philadelphia, winning a championship, especially if it means brushing past the ghosts of playoffs past without the player who was supposed to chase those demons away.

So when the Patriots and Eagles kick off today under expected cloudy skies in a 50-degree chill at Alltel Stadium, something will have to give.

Will it be dynasty or destiny?

New England, which scored impressive playoff victories over Pittsburgh and Indianapolis, is a seven-point favorite to win its third Super Bowl in four years—something only the Cowboys of the mid-1990s accomplished.

In Philadelphia, where there hasn't been a pro sports title since 1983, the Eagles had lost three consecutive NFC Championship Games. They are in their first Super Bowl since the 1980 season and vying for their first NFL title since 1960.

There haven't been two more successful franchises this decade than the Eagles and Patriots. They've done it by expertly manipulating their rosters and developing talent in an era that puts a premium on both.

Each team made controversial offseason deals that have paid off. When the Patriots traded for running back Corey Dillon and the Eagles made a swap for receiver Terrell Owens, both deals were viewed as risks because Dillon in Cincinnati and Owens in San Francisco had developed reputations as malcontents.

Dillon, who rushed for a club-record 1,635 yards, transformed a Patriots offense that was 27th in the league in rushing a year ago.

"He's given us a presence in the running game, both in terms of making tough yards and short-yardage, goal-line situations," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "He's been a complete player for us."

Owens changed the Eagles' attack by giving them the home-run threat they lacked. He caught 77 passes for 1,200 yards and a club-record 14 touchdowns, although he missed the final 2 1/2 games after injuring his knee and ankle Dec. 19 against Dallas.

Owens, who underwent surgery, sat out Saturday's walk-through, but is expected to play. The questions are how much and how effective will he be? And will his mere presence provide Willis Reed-like inspiration?

"When you have a guy like T.O., everyone knows that it is an added weapon," quarterback Donovan McNabb said. "We are able to do a lot more."

Questions about Owens dominated the week's media sessions, which many Eagles were experiencing for the first time. Only four have played in a Super Bowl before, and many hauled around video cameras all week. *New York Times News Service*

IT'S THE calm before the storm. On the eve of Superbowl XXXIX, the biggest American football stage, New England Patriots Tedy Bruschi's son, TJ, 4, outdistances pressure from Mike Vrabel's son Tyler, 4, during a walk through at the empty Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida. Expect the venue to be packed once the real game begins, though. AP

No Jackson 'show' this time

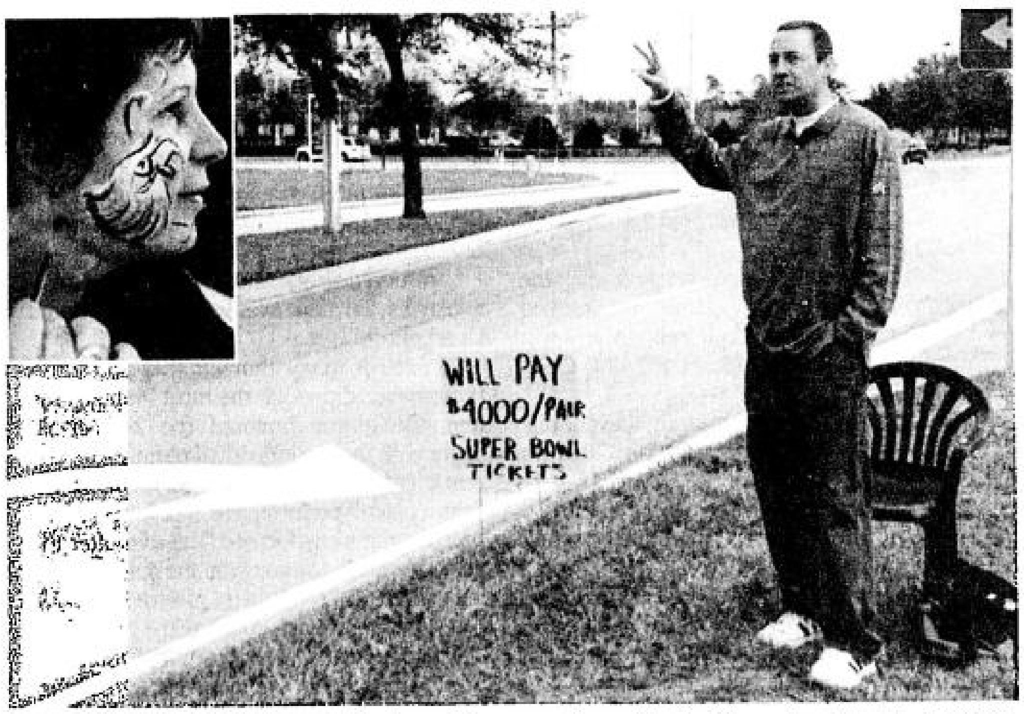
JACKSONVILLE, Florida—Ask just about anyone what they remember most about the New England Patriots' dramatic 32-29 victory over the Carolina Panthers in last year's Super Bowl and chances are you will get the same answer.

"I remember Janet Jackson's breast," said Tom, a Philadelphia Eagles fan enjoying a drink at one of the parties ahead of Sunday's Super Bowl showdown with the Patriots.

The NFL has taken steps to ensure nothing happens to overshadow this year's showcase event.

Paul McCartney has been brought in to headline its halftime show, the 62-year-old former Beatle guaranteeing there will be no problems in his 12-minute performance.

"It's a great honor to do this," said McCartney. "People may have concerns of another wardrobe malfunction, but I can safely tell you that I won't." That sounds good to the NFL, which was left embarrassed and chastised last year for a halftime show that ended with Justine Timberlake ripping at Jackson's outfit, exposing her breast to millions of viewers around the world. *Reuters*



CHARLOTTE Malcolm (inset) of Jacksonville, sure of a seat in the Super Bowl venue, has her face painted with an eagle on the eve of the game. Bill Meadows of Augusta, Georgia, is offering $4,000 dollars (roughly P220,000) for a pair of tickets. AP/REUTERS

Fans pack tiny host city

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—The New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles are expected to produce a bruising battle for Super Bowl XXXIX on Sunday.

In the buildup to the NFL title game it is, however, the host city that is taking the most vicious hits.

The smallest city to host the Super Bowl, Jacksonville is in danger of being overwhelmed by thousands of visitors searching for hotel rooms, cabs, tickets and parties.

Revellers pouring into the downtown core have created gridlock and huge headaches for police.

In an attempt to ease hotel congestion, the NFL took a page from the book of the Athens Olympics organizers and parked five cruise ships along the St. Johns river.

Even they have been overbooked, leaving last-minute visitors traveling as far as Orlando, 150 miles away, to find a room.

Those without tickets have even tougher challenges. Desperate Eagles fans are lining routes into the city holding signs offering $4,000 for a pair of tickets.

In a city with only 300 licensed taxis, finding a way back to your room—if you have one—can be equally tough. Many drivers are refusing to venture into the vortex of partying for fear of never finding their way out.

NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue stands by the league's decision to bring the Super Bowl to Jacksonville, painting it as a return to the sport's roots and a move away from the excesses of past championship games.

"Here in a city connected by bridges we say that this Super Bowl is about building bridges, including a bridge to our small-town roots, to the values of our game and to the passion for football in towns of all sizes throughout America," said Tagliabue.

"In other years, we get lambasted by some people because we're into high-end hotels and luxury in excess and hedonism.

And this year we're not into any of those things, we're getting lambasted."

While Tagliabue chose to play down the Super Bowl glitz, there is no shortage of A-list events and celebrities prowling the football party circuit here.

Playboy and Maxim magazines will stage their annual Super Bowl bashes on Saturday in customary hedonistic fashion while some of the world's richest people and business elite will mingle at exclusive soirees held in sprawling beachside mansions or multi-million yachts on the river. *Reuters*

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Gil Portes denies spreading rumor about Mikey Arroyo

By Nini Valera

"I WASN'T even there."

DIRECTOR Gil Portes has denied being the originator of a text message that is currently doing the rounds, casting congressman/actor/President's son Mike Arroyo as a bully who had the driver of the caterer of his latest movie fired.

The text message, which INQUIRER Entertainment also received, said: "Gil Portes: During a shoot of a Direk Willy Milan film with Mikey Arroyo, *nagwala siya* (he freaked out) and fired the caterer. Why? The van that brings the food to the set has an FPJ foto pasted in one of the windows of the van and this irritated the 'superstar.' He ordered the removal of the photo, but the driver couldn't do it right away because he was busy helping the food crew. Mikey lambasted him, calling him *patay gutom* (scum). Why are they scared of FPJ? Patay na siya (He's dead already)."

"I wasn't even there," Portes told the INQUIRER on Thursday. But he said he had heard the story being related in movie industry circles, particularly at the Tropical Hut Hamburger Restaurant on Panay Avenue in Quezon City, where movie directors, scriptwriters, stuntmen and out-of-work actors usually gathered in the afternoons.

Not fired

"The people who hang out there have been talking about the incident," Portes related. "That was where I heard the tale for the first time."

He identified the caterer as Jojo Vinzon, who was hired for the shooting of Mikey's latest movie, "Six in the City," under K-Entertainment, a first-time producer.

"I know Jojo and I asked him, and he confirmed that the incident happened," said Portes.

In a phone interview, Vinzon told the INQUIRER that he wasn't on the set when the incident supposedly happened. "Only my driver was there," he said in Filipino. "My driver told me about the incident. But I don't know [exactly] what happened.

Vinzon said he did not fire his driver, whom he identified only as Fernan. "I don't know his last name," the caterer said. "Why should I fire him? He's been with me for a long time already."

Asked if the INQUIRER could talk to Fernan, Vinzon said the driver was on another catering job. "He doesn't want to talk," the caterer added. "If you were in his shoes, you wouldn't want to talk, either."

A 'regular' guy

In a hastily organized press conference last Wednesday night, Mikey Arroyo denied that the incident had occurred at all.

"Some details in the text message are wrong," he pointed out. "First, the director of the movie is not Willie Milan, but Al Tantay. I never ordered anyone to be fired, especially [not] for having a picture of FPJ. I respected the man even if he and my mother belonged to different political camps.

"I don't [enjoy] preferential treatment on the set; you can ask my producer that," Mikey added. "I am just a hired person here, like everybody else."

Bryan Chua, the movie's producer, said Mikey was very professional. "He doesn't have airs. He comes on time," Chua said. "Even if he has to stay until 2 a.m. after being on the set since 7 a.m., he doesn't complain."

He described Mikey as a "regular" guy. "He gets along well with everybody, especially the crew. He talks to them more often than he talks to the other stars."

Mikey lamented that the incident had come at a time when his mother, President Macapagal-Arroyo, was calling for national unity. "It couldn't have come at a worse time," he said. "I don't know why [anyone would] want to do this."

Visual pollution

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Jan. 28, a big to-do was made on TV over the unveiling of a giant billboard at Edsa Guadalupe. The huge display sought to set a new world record for the number of digital images used in one billboard.

The event's hosts were visibly and aurally thrilled to cover such a "monumental" occasion, with world-class pretensions, to boot.

Unfortunately, their enthusiasm was lost on some other people who viewed the proceedings with a less gung-ho and ga-ga attitude. Instead they fretted about the wrong signals it could be sending to other giddy, clueless people out there.

They found nothing to celebrate about yet another giant billboard being added to the already glutted sightlines of our ugly urban landscape, especially in the Guadalupe area, where so many billboards already proliferate.

Even before this latest billboard was put up, a growing number of people had been protesting against the seemingly uncontrolled and unsupervised way that all sorts of huge outdoor advertising displays have been mushrooming all over the metropolis.

The protesters specifically rail against sexy billboards that are too graphic for kids, and could potentially distract motorists. But they also complain about the glut of billboards in general, which have compounded Metro Manila's visual unattractiveness.

Some complainants have researched the problem, and they've learned that outdoor ad-

VISUAL/ A2-3

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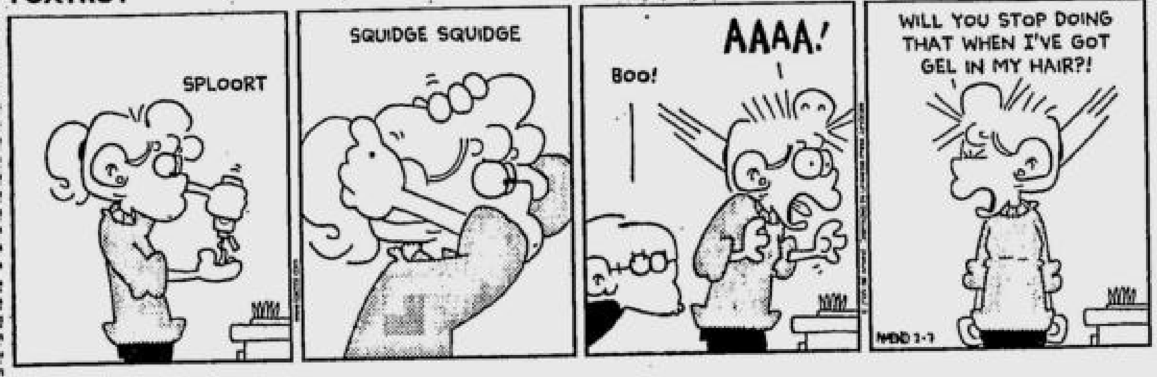
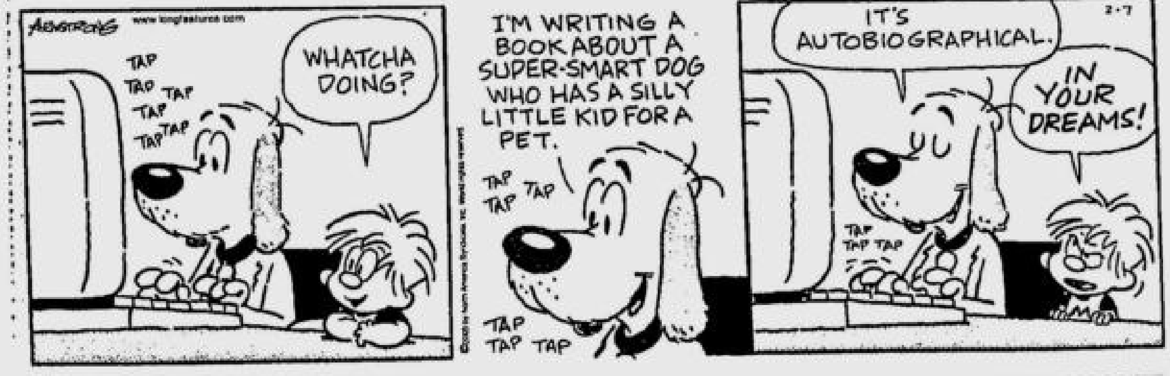
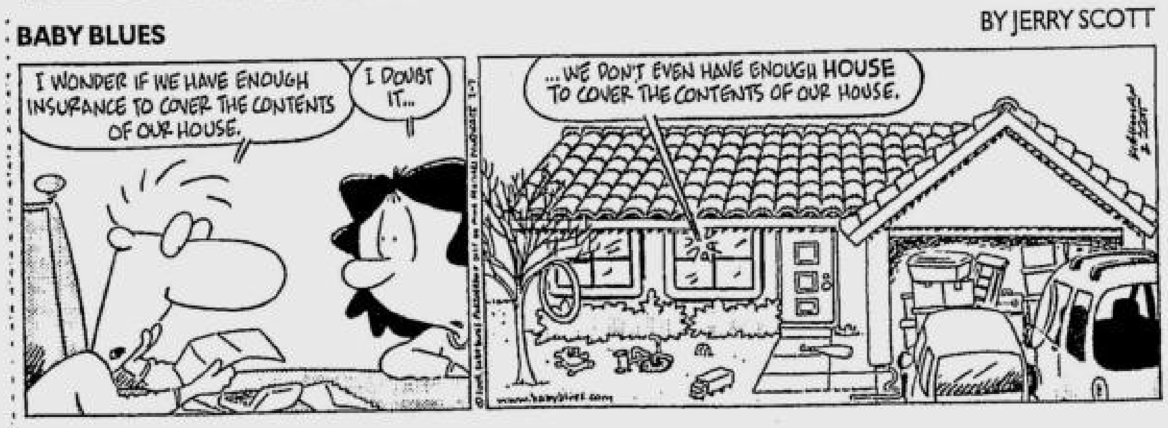

SPLOORT
SQUIDGE SQUIDGE
BOO!
AAAA!
WILL YOU STOP DOING THAT WHEN I'VE GOT GEL IN MY HAIR?!

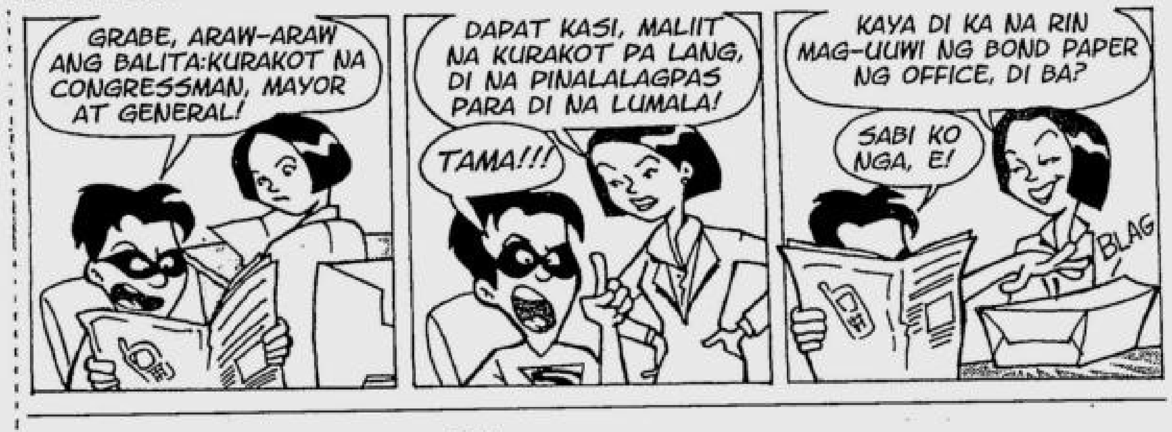
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
WHATCHA DOING?
I'M WRITING A BOOK ABOUT A SUPER-SMART DOG WHO HAS A SILLY LITTLE KID FOR A PET.
TAP TAP TAP
TAP TAP TAP
IT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.
IN YOUR DREAMS!
TAP TAP TAP

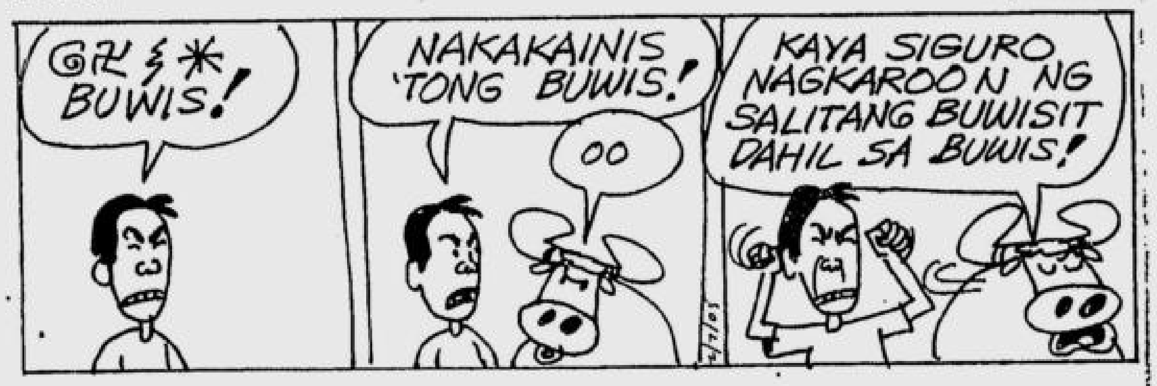
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I WONDER IF WE HAVE ENOUGH INSURANCE TO COVER THE CONTENTS OF OUR HOUSE.
I DOUBT IT...
...WE DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH HOUSE TO COVER THE CONTENTS OF OUR HOUSE.
www.babyblues.com

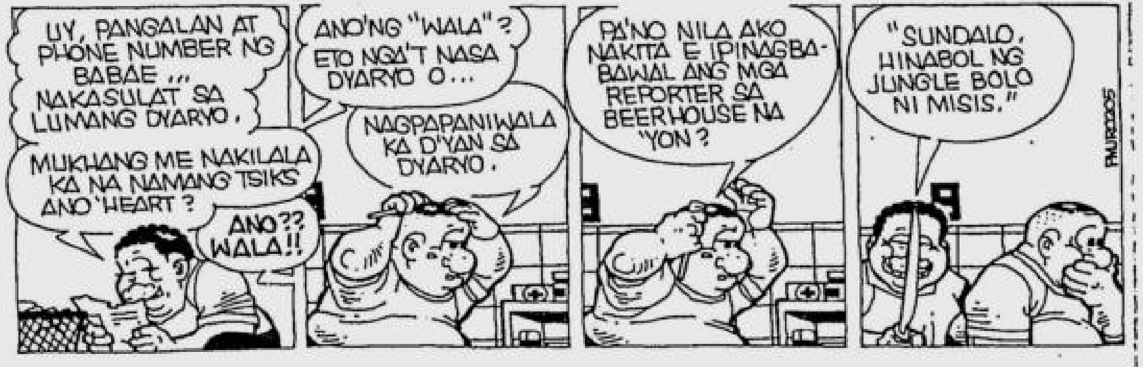
SUPERMHON BY A.G. RODRIGUEZ


GRABE, ARAW-ARAW ANG BALITA:KURAKOT NA CONGRESSMAN, MAYOR AT GENERAL!
DAPAT KASI, MALIIT NA KURAKOT PA LANG, DI NA PINALALAGPAS PARA DI NA LUMALA!
TAMA!!!
KAYA DI KA NA RIN MAG-UUWI NG BOND PAPER NG OFFICE, DI BA?
SABI KO NGA, E!
BLAG

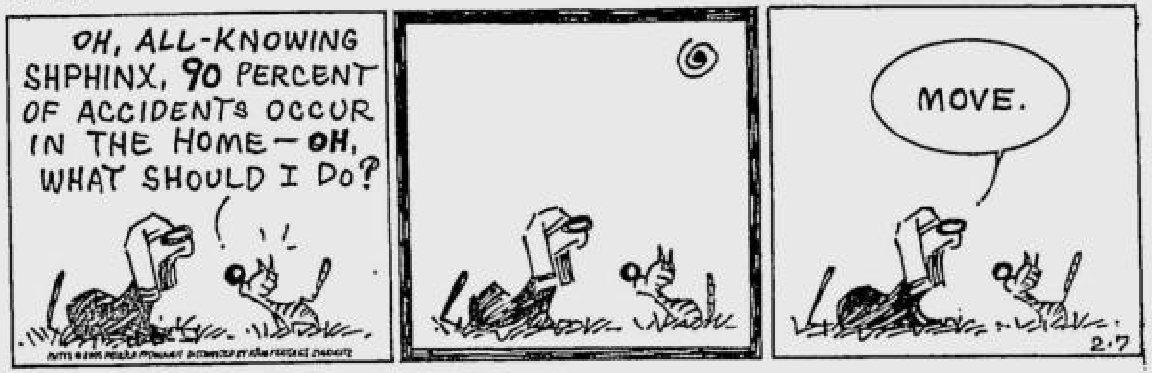
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


@?£*
BUWIS!
NAKAKAINIS 'TONG BUWIS!
OO
KAYA SIGURO NAGKAROON NG SALITANG BUWISIT DAHIL SA BUWIS!

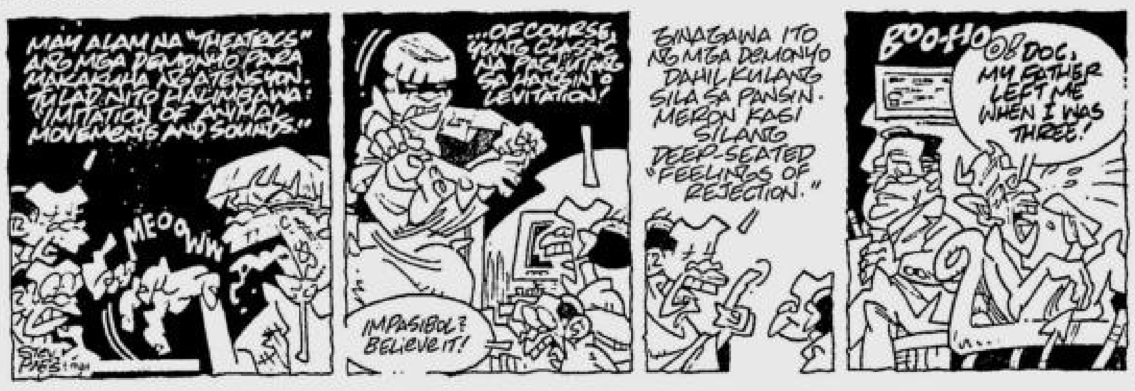
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


UY, PANGALAN AT PHONE NUMBER NG BABAE ... NAKASULAT SA LUMANG DYARYO.
MUKHANG ME NAKILALA KA NA NAMANG TSIKS ANO 'HEART ?
ANO?? WALA!!
ANO'NG "WALA"? ETO NGA'T NASA DYARYO O...
NAGPAPANIWALA KA D'YAN SA DYARYO.
PA'NO NILA AKO NAKITA E IPINAGBABAWAL ANG MGA REPORTER SA BEERHOUSE NA 'YON ?
"SUNDALO, HINABOL NG JUNGLE BOLO NI MISIS."

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, ALL-KNOWING SHPHINX, 90 PERCENT OF ACCIDENTS OCCUR IN THE HOME—OH, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
MOVE.
2·7

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MAY ALAM NA "THEATRICS" ANG MGA DEMONYO PARA MAKAKUHA NG ATENSYON. TULAD NITO HALIMBAWA: "IMITATION OF ANIMAL MOVEMENTS AND SOUNDS."
MEOOWW
...OF COURSE, YUNG CLASSIC NA PAGLUTANG SA HANGIN O LEVITATION!
IMPASIBOL? BELIEVE IT!
GINAGAWA ITO NG MGA DEMONYO DAHIL KULANG SILA SA PANSIN. MERON KASI SILANG DEEP-SEATED "FEELINGS OF REJECTION."
BOO-HO
DOC, MY FATHER LEFT ME WHEN I WAS THREE!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have an earthy, natural style. You are humanitarian and extremely idealistic. You're also a very good judge of character. You're a role model for children: You respect them and believe in justice. You're not afraid to speak out about what you believe. Expect increased solitude this year in order to learn something important.

Birthdate of: Chris Rock, comic/actor; James Spader, actor; Ashton Kutcher, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a wonderful day to start your week off. Enjoy conversations with friends, groups and partners. It's easy to be openhearted and friendly to everyone today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a marvelous day at work. You feel important. People are supportive of you, and not only that, influential people are in your corner now as well!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a lovely day to play and explore new ideas, different philosophies and uncharted territory. Do anything different! Broaden your horizons. You want to expand your world.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day to increase your wealth through family members or real estate. Something benefits you directly where you live. Be open to this.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a fabulous day to schmooze! You'll enjoy the company of others. You feel lighthearted, upbeat and optimistic. This naturally attracts everyone, because enthusiasm is contagious.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a wonderful day at work. Be alert to all possibilities, because you can make money! You can boost your sales or make worthy purchases.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a gorgeous day to flirt, to have fun and to enjoy playful activities with children. The arts can certainly flourish! It's also a wonderful day for financial speculation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel warmhearted about family members today. It's easy to be loving toward others. Real estate deals are extremely profitable today. Is there anything you can do to improve your home?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your optimistic, positive attitude is off the charts today. You feel happy! This makes it a great day to talk to siblings, friends and daily colleagues. Enjoy!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can make profits today at whatever you do. This is a moneymaking day. It's also an excellent day to boost your good reputation among your peers.

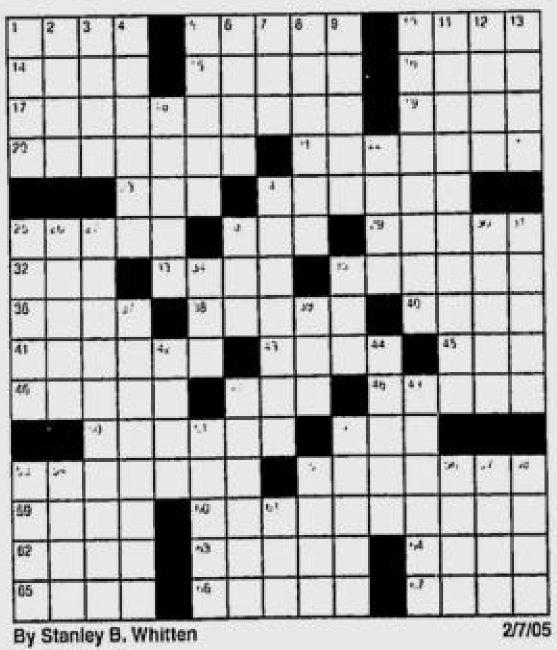
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Travel plans and anything having to do with publishing, the media, medicine and the law are extremely favored today. Go forth with confidence in any of these areas. Enjoy meeting people from other cultures.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your partner can make money today. For some reason, you benefit from the wealth of others. Just say "thank you"! Enjoy this good fortune while it lasts.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Tie with a rope
5 Microsoft man
10 Tacks on
14 Bread spread
15 Battery terminal
16 Blind rodents of rhyme
17 Burger topping
19 Inter __ (among others)
20 Menu items
21 Like clear nights
23 Horace work, "__ Poetica"
24 Spread rumors
25 Pretty Boy __
28 Devotee
29 Slur over
32 Author Fleming
33 Fly like an eagle
35 Atlanta athlete
36 Make a long story short?
38 Knitting stitch
40 Gumbo ingredient
41 Stories
43 Stead
45 Ignited
46 Cassia family plant
47 Moroccan city
48 Brother's daughter
50 Fishing nets
52 Indistinct
53 Weir
55 Populated
59 Part of HOMES
60 Burger topping
62 Brits' raincoats
63 1985 Malkovich film
64 Rotating parts
65 Cash-drawer slot
66 Transmits
67 Rough journey

DOWN
1 Site for an earring
2 Alda or Bates
3 Religious offshoot
4 Yippee!
5 Vapors
6 Picnic pests
7 Rocky peak
8 Menlo Park inventor
9 Clan divisions
10 City in the Texas panhandle
11 Burger topping
12 602 in letters
13 Do ushering
18 Dweebs
22 On the briny
24 Messes up the message
25 Medieval holdings
26 Dipper
27 Burger topping
28 Air-safety agcy.
30 Greek column
31 Maternally related
34 Mil. training course
35 Service charge
37 Lacking expression
39 Taylor of filmdom
42 Attack
44 Organized labor group
47 Pertaining to women
49 Collision
51 Titles
52 Potvin or Savard
53 Interoffice missive
54 Modern Persia
55 Goldfish habitat
56 Prevaricator
57 Salinger heroine
58 Office furniture
61 Desire



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

2/7/05

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

I	N	D	E	C	E	N	T		B	I	A	S	E	S
M	O	O	R	A	G	E	S		A	C	C	E	N	T
M	O	N	O	L	I	T	H		T	O	M	A	T	O
U	S	E	S		S	T	I	R		N	E	H	R	U
N	E	E				I	R	O	N	S		O	A	T
E	S	S	L		U	N	T	I	E		A	R	N	E
			L	A	N	C		L	U	T	I	S	T	S
O	N	C	A	L	L				R	U	D	E	S	T
P	A	R	T	I	A	L		L	A	T	E			
E	P	E	E		S	E	P	A	L		D	A	T	E
N	O	V		C	H	A	R	M				R	U	N
A	L	A	M	O		R	E	I	N		S	E	N	T
R	E	S	I	D	E		A	N	A	C	O	N	D	A
M	O	S	T	E	L		M	A	T	A	H	A	R	I
S	N	E	E	R	S		P	R	O	P	O	S	A	L

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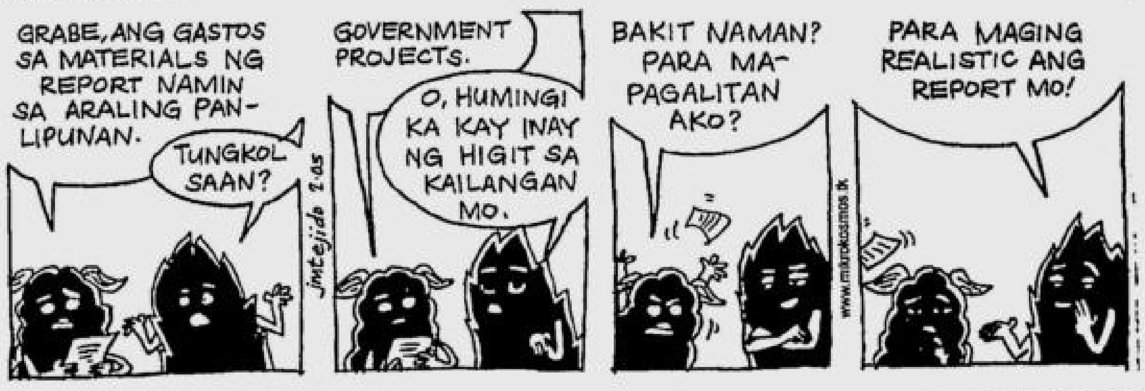
2/7/05

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GRABE, ANG GASTOS SA MATERIALS NG REPORT NAMIN SA ARALING PANLIPUNAN.
TUNGKOL SAAN?
GOVERNMENT PROJECTS.
O, HUMINGI KA KAY INAY NG HIGIT SA KAILANGAN MO.
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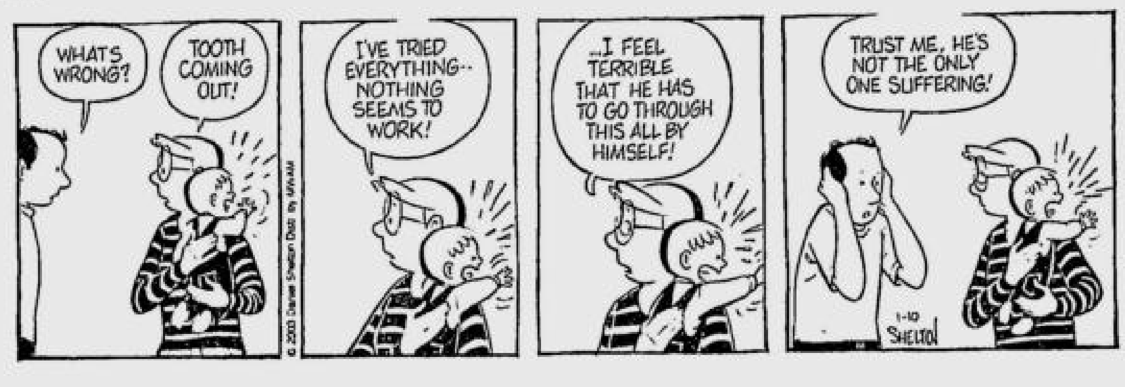
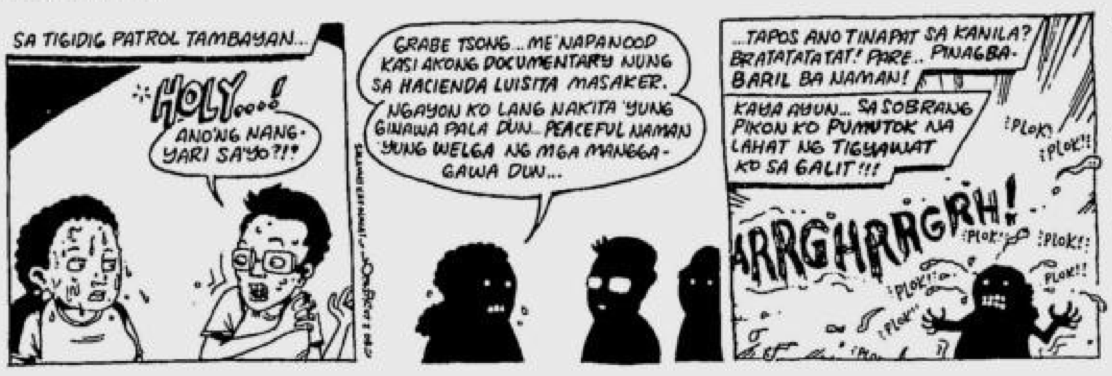
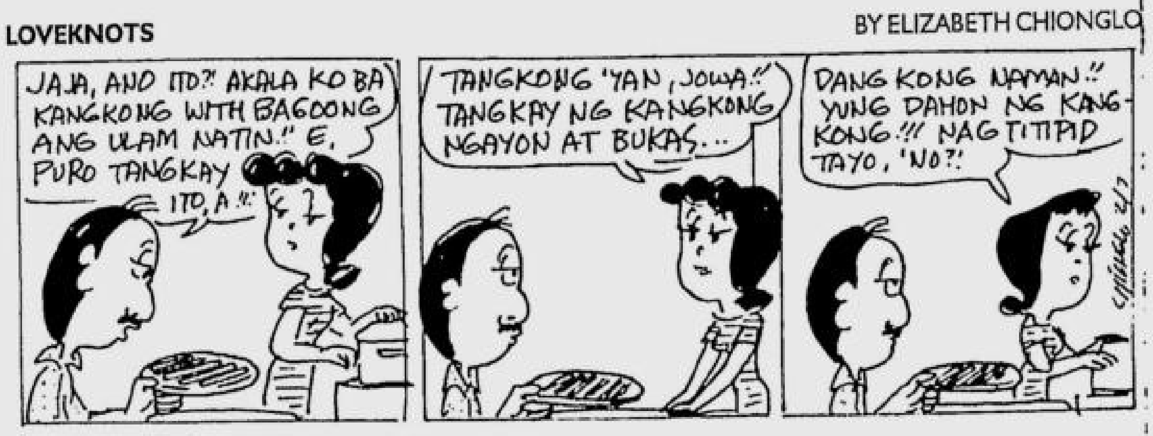
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHATS WRONG?
TOOTH COMING OUT!
I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING... NOTHING SEEMS TO WORK!
...I FEEL TERRIBLE THAT HE HAS TO GO THROUGH THIS ALL BY HIMSELF!
TRUST ME, HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE SUFFERING!

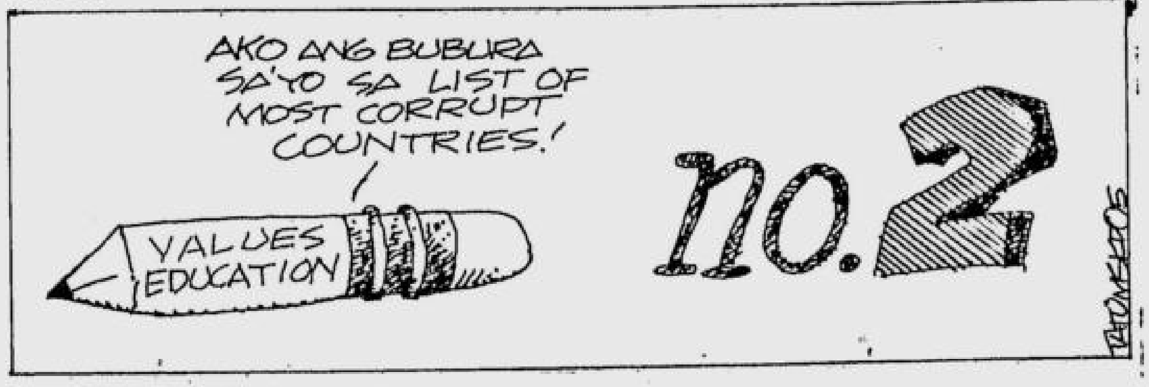
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

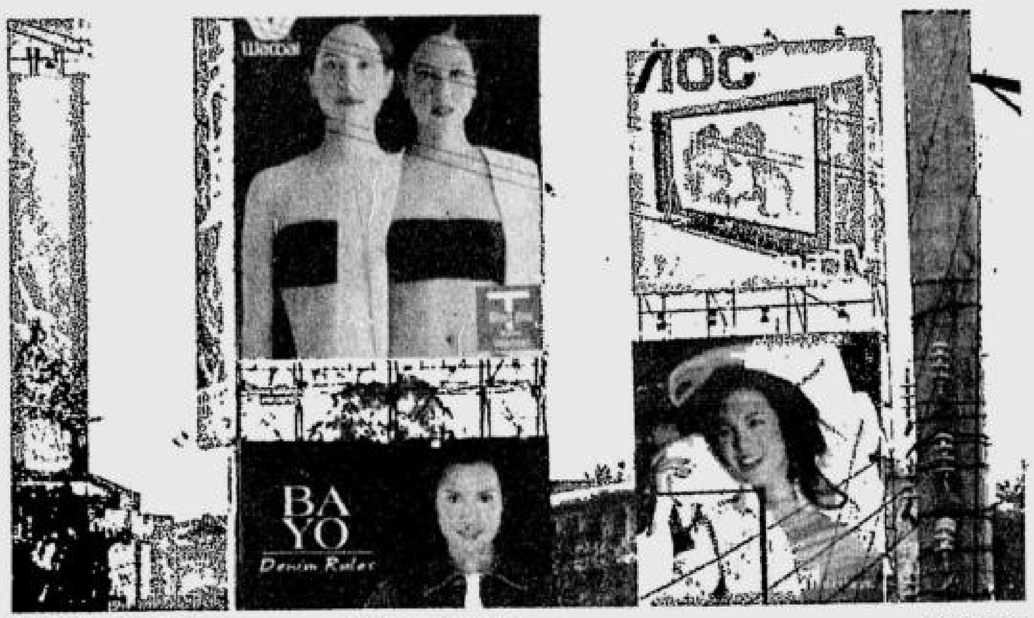

SA TIGIDIG PATROL TAMBAYAN...
HOLY...!
ANO'NG NANGYARI SA'YO?!?
GRABE TSONG... ME NAPANOOD KASI AKONG DOCUMENTARY NUNG SA HACIENDA LUISITA MASAKER.
NGAYON KO LANG NAKITA 'YUNG GINAWA PALA DUN... PEACEFUL NAMAN 'YUNG WELGA NG MGA MANGGAGAWA DUN...
...TAPOS ANO TINAPAT SA KANILA? BRATATATATAT! PARE... PINAGBABARIL BA NAMAN!
KAYA AYUN... SA SOBRANG PIKON KO PUMUTOK NA LAHAT NG TIGYAWAT KO SA GALIT!!!
ARRGHRRGRH!
PLOK! PLOK! PLOK! PLOK!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ANO ITO?! AKALA KO BA KANGKONG WITH BAGOONG ANG ULAM NATIN!" E, PURO TANGKAY ITO, A!!
TANGKONG 'YAN, JOWA!! TANGKAY NG KANGKONG NGAYON AT BUKAS...
DANGKONG NAMAN!! YUNG DAHON NG KANGKONG!!! NAGTITIPID TAYO, 'NO?!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AKO ANG BUBURA SA'YO SA LIST OF MOST CORRUPT COUNTRIES!
VALUES EDUCATION
no.2



EDSA in 2003. There are more billboards now. BOY CABRIDO

Visual pollution

From page A2-1

vertising is currently popular because it gives good value for money in terms of audience reach and recall.

Also, the go signals to put up a billboard is given by the city or municipality in which it is to be erected.

This has made them realize that, if the situation is to be improved, enough people have to strongly persuade their local government executives to come up with more stringent supervisory standards, so that the messy problem can be solved.

They point to places like Singapore, where strict standards of compliance first have to be met before billboards are allowed to be put up.

Why can't similar standards be set and met here?

For that to happen, however, many more people have to feel strongly about the way the metropolis looks, the need to curtail the "visual pollution" that too many billboards engender, the effect of certain billboards on young people, etc.

Can enough people be persuaded to take action? Will you be one of them?

'The Amazing Race'

ON FEB. 9, AXN will present the two-hour season finale of "The Amazing Race," simulcast via satellite from the US at 10 a.m. Competing for the $1M top pot are **Kris and Jon, Hayden and Aaron, Freddy and Kendra,** and **Adam and Rebecca.**

The premiere of the new "Amazing Race 7" will be on March 2, from 10 p.m. to midnight. "TAR7" features "Survivor: All Star" couple **Rob Mariano** and **Amber Brkich** to add familiarity to the race.

On Cartoon Network

FEB. 7, at 6:30 p.m. on Cartoon Network, the episode on "Static Schock" is "Schock to the System": 15-year-old Virgil Hawkins, harassed at school by a dangerous bully, is transformed by a powerful gas mutagen into a master of electormagnetic energy, and he decides to use his powers for good—as a superhero.

Feb. 8 at noon on "The Yogi Bear Show," catch the hijinks of Yogi and his best friend Boo-Boo as they try to outsmart Ranger Jones and Jellystone National Park visitors for their food.

Feb. 9 at 8 p.m., Cartoon Network invites Boneless Chicken from "Cow & Chicken" to host its Chinese New Year (the Year of the Rooster) special, with a two-hour block featuring the Looney Tunes celebrity, Foghorn Leghorn.

'American Chopper'

DISCOVERY Channel's acclaimed series, "American Chopper," captures the day-to-day drama of the Teutul family and their struggles to maintain their flourishing custom motorcycle shop in New York, as well as their personal interrelationships.

Episodes: Feb. 7 at 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., **Paul Teutul Sr. and Jr.** create an incredible Black Widow theme motorcycle.

Feb. 11 at 8 p.m., with the deadline for the Black Widow theme motorcycle looming, the pressure mounts. But the crew races to finish it in time for one of New York's biggest trade shows.

Feb. 18 at 8 p.m., sparks fly and tempers flare as Paul Jr. battles to created a $150,000 Race Car theme bike in just 10 days. Feb. 25 at 8 p.m., the crew struggles to finish the $150,000 bike. The tight schedule puts Paul Jr. in an explosive situation.

Seven cheers for Siloy on Feb. 8

CEBU DAILY NEWS
CEBU'S ONLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The fastest-growing regional paper in the Visayas

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, January 7, 2005

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY 10 pm after Big News

American Idol
Watch it with America!
ABC iba tayo

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		The Working President	Concert at the Park			Dial M	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	Art Is-Kool	Anime Ring Kasho		Anime Ring Kasho		Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice		Fear Factor		Big News	Popsi		Extreme Island	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Sex & the City		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		Chowtime Na!		V League				Good Take	IBC News Tonite	Linawin Natin	
Solar		Wow		Slamball		Restol	Zeta Project	Mucha Lucha!	Spiderman	Stargate SG1		One Hundred Girls							
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix		100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd				Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		The O.C.		Saturday Night Live		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Knock First	Will & Grace	JKX	Last Comic Standing		Queer Eye For A Straight Guy		Who Wants To Marry My Dad		Nip/ Tuck	
Cinema One		Langit Sa Piling Mo				Maruja				Jamias Barako Ng Maynila				Dahas				Wating	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Survivor: Thailand						Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video	Jake 2.0		Charmed		News Central			Travel Time
AXN		24		24		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Samurai X	Samurai X	Beastmaster		Fear Factor		The Outer Limits		24		24	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	That 70s Show	Everybody Loves Raymond	Grounded For Life	Becker	Breaking The Magicians Code/ The Casino		Friends	That 70s Show
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Killer Instinct	Totally Wild	Be The Creature		Planet Wild	Wildlife Detectives	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials/ Built For The Kill: Bird Of Prey		Killer Instinct/ Last Maneater: Killer Tigers Of India/Totally Wild		Be The Creature	
Solar Sports		In This Corner		KOTV Classics		Freestyle Motorcross		Monster Jam		Sagupaan		GWS ep.5-2005	NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Clippers @ Philadelphia					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Story		BTVR	Lifestyle		Brini Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO		Malibu's Most Wanted		A Very Brady Sequel			She's In Love (5:45 PM)				Clueless (7:25 PM)			Ghost Ship			Babe		
Star Movies			Sleeping With The Enemy				Lost Junction			Barbershop (7:15 PM)				Bringing Down The House			Life (10:45PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Pool/Snooker Mosconi Cup '04		Spanish Football League 2004/05				Eng. Premier League Highlights 04/05		Sportscenter Taiwan	NFL Superbowl XXXIX Patriots vs. Eagles						
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax				Mad Dog And Glory (4:15 PM)			The Age Of Innocence					Prehysteria			Black Point (9:25 PM)			Roger Dodger (11:10PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Loves Enduring Promise				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Child Of Our Time		King Solomon's Mines			Just Cause (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Extreme Engineering		Monster Garage		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Civilizations	
MTV Philippines		MTV Lokal		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV U-Break	Non-Stop Hits	MTV Brand New	MTV Fashionista	TRL		Cribs	Spring Break	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus		FBR Open Day4						Razzworld		Italian Serie A				NFL Delayed Telecast					
EWTN	St. Matthew	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Benediction And Devotion	Story Keepers	Image Of God	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Light Of The East II	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	Threshold Of Hope Encore		Sunday Night Live With Fr. Groeschel		Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	G.K. Chesterton	Catholic Compass	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

TANONG NG BAYAN
YEAR OF THE ROOSTER:
BUENAS BA SA 'PINAS?
CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! TEXT 2910 NOW!
TUWING HUWEBES
pagkatapos ng American Idol
Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

SM CINEMA movietime

moviepickoftheWeek
Richard Gere Jennifer Lopez Susan Sarandon
Shall we Dance?
MTRCB Rating: G (All ages admitted)

OPENS THIS WEEK

WITHOUT A PADDLE
MTRCB RATING. PG13

ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
Subject to MTRCB RATING

A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
MTRCB RATING R13

RACING STRIPES
Subject to MTRCB RATING

NOW SHOWING

THE PODIUM CINEMA
For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

1 SHALL WE DANCE
1.00 FS / 1.30 MF / 3.45 MF / 5.30 END

2 MEET THE FOCKERS
1.20 FS / 1.50 MF / 4.05 MF / 6.00 END

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
5 RACING STRIPES
6 WITHOUT A PADDLE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 ELEKTRA
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 WHITE NOISE

sm city fairview
1 SALSA smcinemaexclusive
2 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 ELEKTRA
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 RACING STRIPES
9 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10 MAD HOUSE
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm city north edsa
1 ELEKTRA
2 RACING STRIPES
3 WITHOUT A PADDLE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SHALL WE DANCE
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city manila
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 RACING STRIPES
6 ELEKTRA
7 WITHOUT A PADDLE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 WHITE NOISE
11 LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
12 MAD HOUSE

sm city sta. mesa
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ELEKTRA
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 RACING STRIPES
7 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10 WHITE NOISE

sm city southmall
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 SALSA smcinemaexclusive
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 ELEKTRA
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city bicutan
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 ELEKTRA
2 BIRTH
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OUT OF REACH
5 HELLWOLF
6 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city baguio
1 ELEKTRA
2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 UNO
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm city batangas
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ELEKTRA
4 WHITE NOISE

sm city dasmariñas
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ELEKTRA
3 MAD HOUSE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city marilao
1 ELEKTRA
2 MAD HOUSE
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 BLADE TRINITY

sm city bacoor
1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ELEKTRA
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 WHITE NOISE
8 BLADE TRINITY

sm city lucena
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 HELLWOLF
3 UNO
4 RAISE YOUR VOICE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 ELEKTRA
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 HAROLD AND KUMAR
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 BLADE TRINITY
8 ELEKTRA

sm city iloilo
1 RAISE YOUR VOICE
2 RESERVED
3 WHITE NOISE
4 MAD HOUSE
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 ELEKTRA
7 RESERVED
8 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

sm city davao
1 ELEKTRA
2 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
3 RAISE YOUR VOICE
4 HAROLD AND KUMAR
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 WHITE NOISE

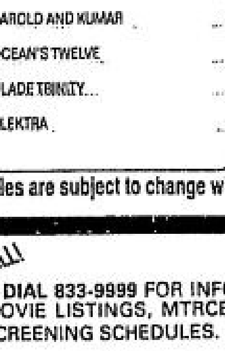
sm city cagayan de oro
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 HONEY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 ELEKTRA

Movies are subject to change without prior notice • For complete movie schedule, visit www.smcinema.com

CALL!
DIAL 833-9999 FOR INFORMATION AND MOVIE LISTINGS, MTRCB RATINGS AND SCREENING SCHEDULES.

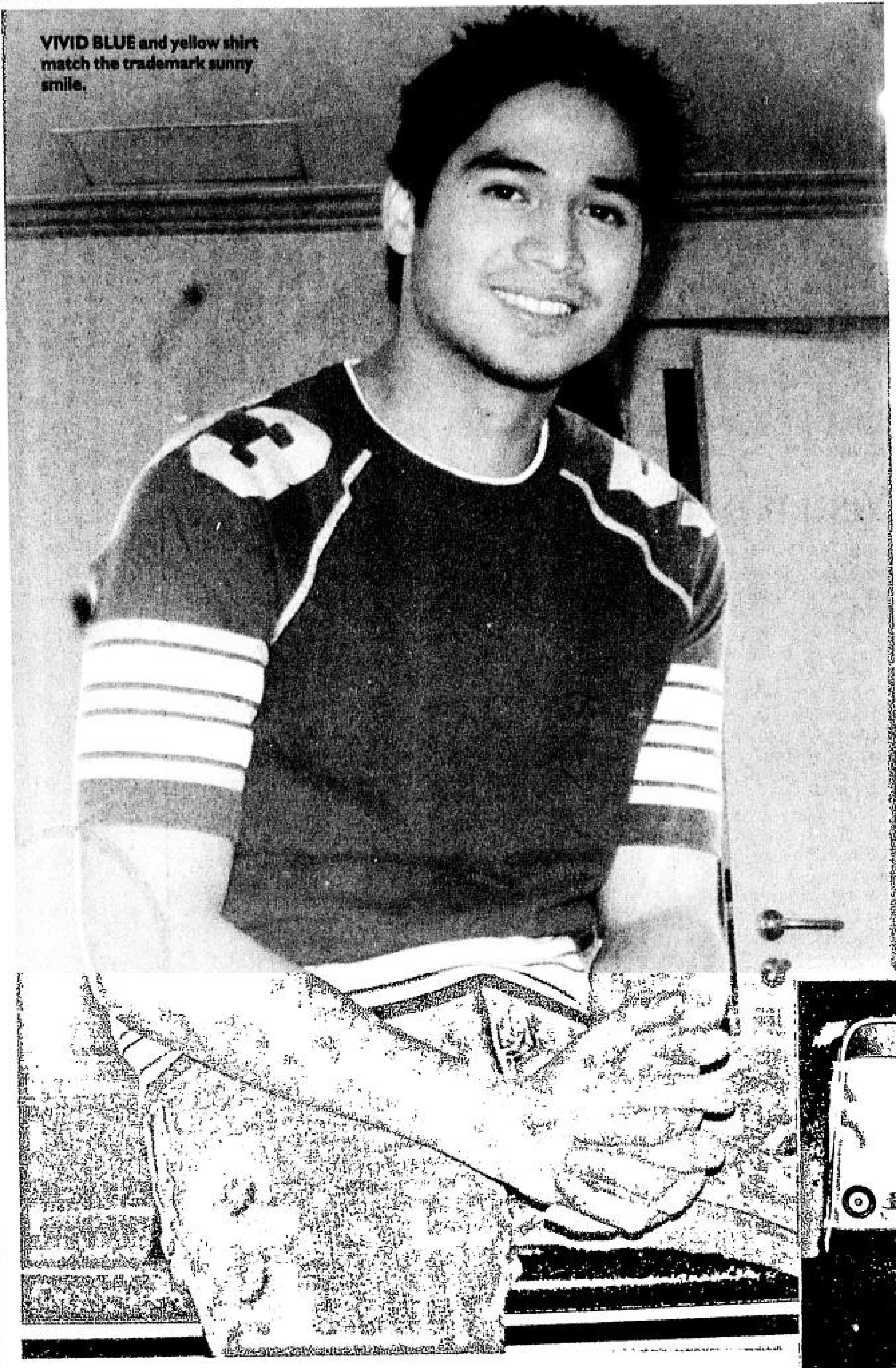
SURF!
VISIT US AT www.smcinema.com FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA.

cinemaexclusive



SALSA
MTRCB RATING. PG13
TODAY
SM SOUTHMALL • SM FAIRVIEW

LITTLE BLACK BOOK
Subject to MTRCB RATING
TODAY
SM MANILA


VIVID BLUE and yellow shirt match the trademark sunny smile.

PROOF OF PREFERENCE: Ben Sherman bag

PIOLO: Color me bright

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Raffy Lerma

MOVIE heartthrob Piolo Pascual says he became a "colorful person" when he became a Christian. He has his wardrobe of colorful clothes to prove it.

"My tastes evolved. I now enjoy brighter colors," Piolo tells INQUIRER Entertainment during a one-on-one interview in his dressing room at the ABS-CBN studios in Quezon City. "I [no longer] limit myself to black, white or earth shades. I also like pastels now. I like the colors of the rainbow."

Piolo says this outlook extends to the other aspects of his life, and that it is the direct result of his being a member of the Victory Christian Fellowship Church. "I like beautiful things."

For this Out of the Closet visit, the actor changed into a bright blue and yellow top.

He brought out his Bible, too, and a little book called "Our Daily Bread." Despite his busy schedule, he says, he always finds time to read them.

"This keeps me alive," he says of his pocket-size Bible. "I want to be a good example to the younger generation of actors and actresses. I want them to realize that what we're doing is just work. They should be humble and never let stardom go to their heads, because God can take it away from them in a snap."

What was supposed to be a one-hour interview with Piolo stretched to three hours because we had to pause for his scheduled dubbing and a television guesting. The people around him were frantic, but Piolo calmly answered all our questions. "*Mukhang ngarag silang lahat* (they all look frazzled)," he said, laughing. "This has been one really wild day."

BOOKS. "My Bible is my life. I bring it with me everywhere. I also bring my copy of 'Our Daily Bread' wherever I go."

SHOES. "My favorite pair is from Ben Sherman. They're very, very comfy. I bought this also because I like the red, blue and white combination. I can wear this with anything. I've only had it for a month. I got it from the [United] States. Not a lot of people wear this brand here; that's why I like it. Normally, I wear it with jeans. Actually, I had it on during the last part of my [upcoming] movie, 'Dreamboy.'"

BAG. "I like the one I got from Ben Sherman.

PIOLO/ A2-6

CREATURE OF HABIT. Same designer, almost the same bag.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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OUT OF THE CLOSET

See'eMall!

AYALA CINEMAS THX

Movies/schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729-7777

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4		GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
THX 1 SHALL WE DANCE	1 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	5 RACING STRIPES	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 12 25, 3 10, 5 55, 8 40, 11 25	1 ITS ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	2 ELEKTRA	2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	6 SHALL WE DANCE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 SHALL WE DANCE 2 10, 4 30, 6 45, 9 00, 11 15	2 HAROLD & KUMAR
3 ELEKTRA	3 SHALL WE DANCE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 ELEKTRA 1 10, 3 30, 5 50, 8 10, 10 30	7 MEET THE FOCKERS	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 MEET THE FOCKERS 1 30, 4 00, 6 30, 9 00, 11 30	3 ELEKTRA
4 RACING STRIPES	4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	4 WITHOUT A PADDLE		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 2 35, 4 45, 6 55, 9 05, 11 15	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 ELEKTRA 2 10, 4 30, 6 50, 9 10, 11 30	5

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 1 20, 4.05, 6 50, 9 35
2 SHALL WE DANCE 12 45, 3 00, 5 15, 7 30, 9 45

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Photoworld Exhibit February 3-8 2005	OB Montessori February 6, 2005	Channel 28 and Celebration Specialist February 4-6, 2005

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

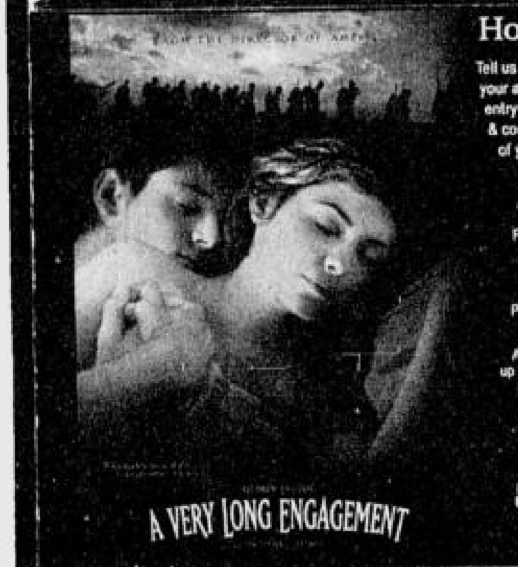
GREENBELT 3 PARK	GREENBELT 3 LOBBY
Valentine Show featuring Bituin Escalante February 12, 2004	Vera Wang Gown Exhibit February 17-28, 2005

Onstage

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES presents Busybody
at REP's GLOBE THEATER - Feb. 11,12,13,18,19,20,25,26,27

Ayala MUSEUM

Visit the New Ayala Museum located beside Greenbelt 4 along Makati Avenue.
For inquiries, please call 757-7117



How Far Will You Go For Love?

Tell us how far you'll go for love & win Ayala Cinemas movie passes. Type your answer in a short bond paper, font size 12, double space. Sign your entry on the lower right side of the page & indicate your name, address & contact number. Seal inside a long letter envelope together with half of your cinema ticket & drop in boxes located in our cinema lobbies.

There will be 10 winners of 2 pcs. admit 2 cinema passes. Winners will be notified through registered mail, newspaper ads & phone call.

Prizes can be claimed at the Ayala Cinemas office, 5th flr. Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. Winners must present a valid ID & the notice received thru registered mail.

Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the receipt of the notification shall be forfeited with prior approval of DTI.

All employees of Ayala Cinemas & its subsidiaries including their relatives up to 2nd degree in consaguinity affinity are disqualified from joing the promo.

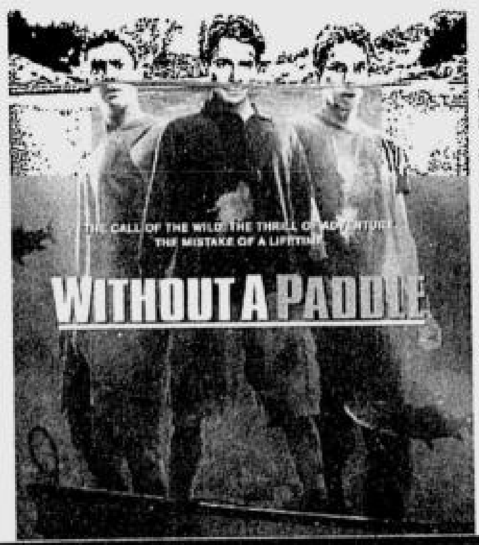
All prizes are not convertible to cash but are transferable.

The raffle draw will be held at the 5th flr. of Glorietta 4, Ayala Center on March 2, 2005 at 2pm with the presence of a DTI representative.

NOW SHOWING IN AYALA CINEMAS

AYALA CINEMAS

Promo duration: Feb. 2 - 16, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit # A1-094, Series of 2005.


THE CALL OF THE WILD. THE THRILL OF ADVENTURE. THE MISTAKE OF A LIFETIME.
WITHOUT A PADDLE

Get a chance to win a 3 day - 2 night stay in Days Inn Suites Subic for every one time purchase of 4 "Without A Paddle" movie tickets in Market Market Cinemas

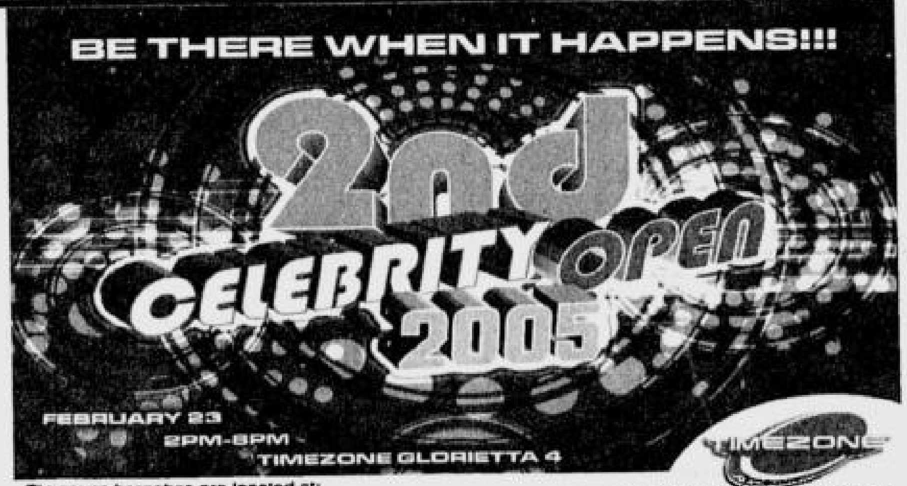
PROMO MECHANICS

1. Every single receipt purchase of 4 pcs "Without A Paddle" movie tickets at Market Market cinemas entitles the moviegoer to 1 raffle ticket
2. A drop box will be provided at the cinema lobby.
3. Winner will receive a Gift Certificate from Days Inn Suites Subic
   a. GC is valid until May 2005
   b. GC is a 3 day – 2 night continuous stay between Sun – Thurs accommodation only
4. Winners will be notified through registered mail and a phone call
5. The prize can be claimed at the Ayala Cinemas office, 5th flr. Glorietta 4 Ayala Center, Makati. Winner must present a valid ID and the notice received thru registered mail
6. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the receipt of the notification shall be forfeited with prior approval of DTI
7. All employees of Ayala Cinemas and its subsidiaries including their relatives up to the second degree in consaguinity affinity are disqualified from joining the promo
8. All prizes are not convertible to cash but are transferable

Promo duration
February 1 - 6, 2005
Per DTI-NCR permit # A2-071
Series of 2005

United International Pictures

MARKET! MARKET!



Timezone branches are located at:

Glorietta 4 729 3602/53
Glorietta 2 840 1250/0005
Greenbelt 3 757-3676
Greenbelt 1 752 6540
Alabang Town Center-Main 850-0574
Alabang Town Center-Cinema 850-8830
Starmall 718-3480
SM Megamall 687-8683
Greenhills 722-2159
Metropoint 833-0575
Market Market 886-7360
Cebu 032 232-3501
Robinsons Lipa (043)757-3012
Pavilion Mall 520-8747
NCCC Mall, Davao (082)299-4709

AYALA CINEMAS

Watch the perfect date movie of the year
at **AYALA CINEMAS** starting February 9

Richard Gutierrez
Mark Herras
Angel Locsin
Jennylyn Mercado
Let The Love Begin
GMA FILMS
Directed by Mac C. Alejandro
GMA

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEXT HOTLINE: 0917-6095900 • CUSTOMER SERVICE HOTLINE: Glorietta - 752-7272; from 10am to 8pm • Greenbelt - 757-4853; from 11am to 12mn • Alabang Town Center - 842-2782; from 10am to 8pm Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231-5342 loc 324 • AYALA CINEMA LINKS: For screening times call 729-7777. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart). Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

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LoveMall!

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT • THX 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00	6 SHALL WE DANCE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 BLADE TRINITY 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 RACING STRIPES 10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00	8 BATH HOUSE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 WITHOUT A PADDLE 10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00	9 MEET THE FOCKERS 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
5 ELEKTRA 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10 WHITE NOISE 12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 SHALL WE DANCE	10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
2 RACING STRIPES 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	5 MEET THE FOCKERS 10:20 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 ELEKTRA 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50	6 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
4 RESERVE	7 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	5 SHALL WE DANCE 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
2 ELEKTRA 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	6 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:20 10:30
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE 10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00	7 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
4 MEET THE FOCKERS 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00	8 RACING STRIPES 10:50 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ELEKTRA 10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25	5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
2 RACING STRIPES 11:40 1:55 4:05 6:15 8:25	6 SHALL WE DANCE 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30	7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
4 BLADE TRINITY 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 8:50	8 OCEAN'S TWELVE 12:30 3:00

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SHALL WE DANCE	3 RACING STRIPES
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575	CAINTA 240-4661
1 UNO	1 ELEKTRA
2 RESIDENT EVIL 2	2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 NED KELLY	3 RACING STRIPES
4 SYLVIA	4 SHALL WE DANCE

What's Happening — the great outdoor adventure getaway!

Submit an 8R size black and white or colored photo of you with your buddies on an adventure trip and provide an off-the-wall description.

Drop all entries at the nearest Robinsons Movieworld Branch Operations Office

Deadline of submission: February 6 (SUNDAY)

Prizes are:
Grand Prize: Gift Certificate - Days Inn Hotel, Subic
Hotel Accomodation for 4 (four) - 2 Days and 3 Nights
Consolation Prizes:
"Without A Paddle" T-shirts and Teddy bears

Photo entries will be exhibited on February 10 and onwards at Robinsons Movieworld ERMITA

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1 MEET THE FOCKERS	1 BLADE TRINITY
2 SHALL WE DANCE	2 ELEKTRA
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION	3 IN SEARCH OF AN IMPOTENT MAN
4 MADHOUSE	4 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
5 ELEKTRA	5 WHITE NOISE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332	ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 ELEKTRA	1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE	2 THE TOOL BOX MURDER
3 BLADE TRINITY	3 HAUNTED SPIRITS 2
4 MADHOUSE	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 MEET THE FOCKERS	

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1 ELEKTRA	1 BIRTH
2 SHALL WE DANCE	2 2046
3 RACING STRIPES	3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MEET THE FOCKERS	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	5 HELLWOLF
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13	6 ELEKTRA

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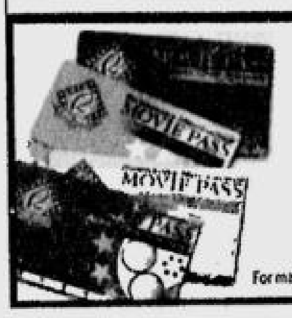
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE	1 ELEKTRA
2 NED KELLY	2 WHITE NOISE
3 ELEKTRA	3 RAISE YOUR VOICE
4 WHITE NOISE	4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION	5 MADHOUSE
6 UNO	6 2046



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The long awaited screen version of Broadway's 'Phantom'

Emmy Rossum with Gerarld Butler

At only 18 years old, **Emmy Rossum** *(The Day After Tomorrow)* is all ready to fill the shoes as the next big thing, but you probably didn't know that. Popping up in entertainment magazines all over the world for the past year, Emmy has been deemed a bonafide star before even becoming one. Born and raised in New York, Emmy displayed a musical talent at a young age when she joined the Metropolitan Opera's Children's Choir, performing with the likes of such musical talents as Placido Domingo and Pavarotti.

Rossum sees Christine as a lonely soul looking for the love and protection her father provided before his untimely death. "Christine is so desperate to find a sign of her father's love that when she first hears the Phantom's voice, she desperately wants to believe he is the 'Angel of Music' her father promised to send her. She discovers that they are kindred spirits, as he is lonely and damaged as well. Their relationship begins as one of great affection and admiration because they inspire one another artistically. But as Christine begins to mature and become a more confident young woman, the Phantom starts looking at her differently."

Indeed, the Phantom falls obsessively in love with Christine – as she is falling for the Vicomte Raoul de Chagny, the Opera Populaire's wealthy new patron and Christine's childhood sweetheart. "All the Phantom wants is a companion, someone who understands him, someone to talk to," Butler says. "He has become accustomed to rejection, but there's one rejection that he can't take and that is from Christine, because she has become the sole focus of his life. As he watches her become drawn to Raoul, the Phantom is increasingly blinded by his rage and desire. He thinks that if he can just write this opera for her, then she'll love him, or if he can bring her to his lair, make her see his world, then she'll finally understand him."

Andrew Lloyd Webber, director ***Joel Schumacher*** and Warner Bros. Pictures will proudly present *Andrew Lloyd Webber's* ***The Phantom of the Opera***, the highly anticipated film adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's celebrated stage musical.

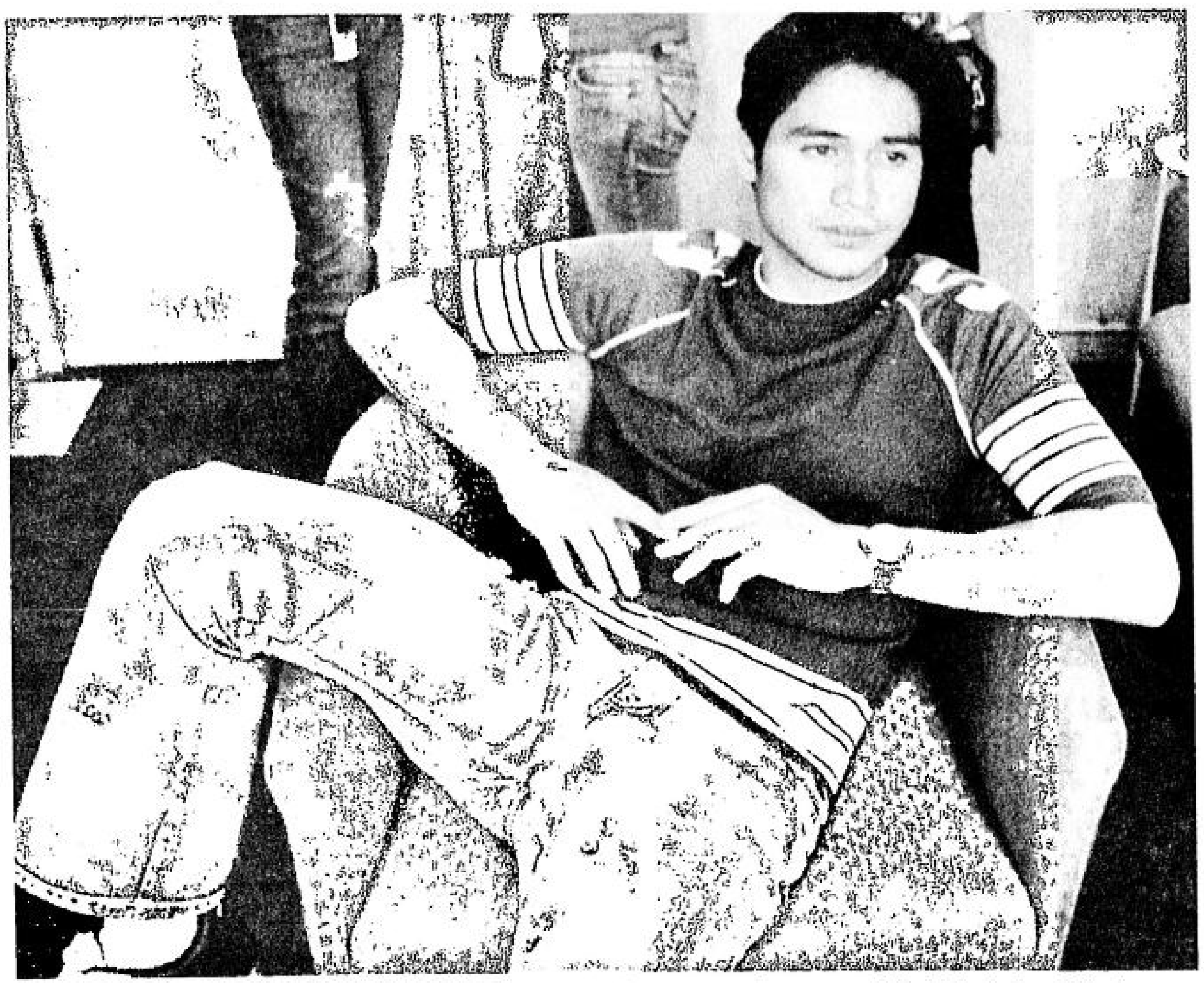
Based on Gaston Leroux's novel ***The Phantom of the Opera***, Lloyd Webber's musical phenomenon is the largest grossing stage or screen production in the world, having garnered worldwide box office receipts over $3.2 billion.

Since its debut in London's West End at Her Majesty's Theatre on October 9, 1986, the enduringly popular musical has reached an estimated audience of 80 million people. More than 65,000 performances of *Phantom* have been staged for theatergoers in 18 countries around the world. In August of 2003, the show marked its 7000th performance. Productions of *Phantom* have earned over 50 major awards, including three Olivier Awards, seven Tony Awards, seven Drama Desk Awards and three Outer Critic's Circle Awards.

The first Broadway production of *Phantom* opened at New York's Majestic Theatre in January of 1988, and has since gone on to become the longest running musical in Broadway history, playing to more than 10.3 million people. Current productions on Broadway at the Majestic, in London at Her Majesty's and the United States tour continue to set records, thrilling audiences and garnering critical acclaim.

Released in 1987, the musical's original cast recording, featuring performances by Michael Crawford as the Phantom and Sarah Brightman as Christine, is the biggest selling cast album of all time, having sold over 40 million copies. It was the first cast album in British musical history to enter the charts at number one, and has since earned platinum status around the world. •

ADVT



"MY TASTES in clothes have evolved," he says. But comfort is a constant factor, especially in his choice of blue jeans. Top right, Hanae Mori cologne, the pick of the moment. Right, Ben Sherman shoes

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed in accompanied by a parent or adult

OPENS FEBRUARY 9

All I Ask Of You

NO MORE TALK OF DARKNESS;
FORGET THESE WIDE-EYED FEARS.
I'M HERE, NOTHING CAN HARM YOU --
MY WORDS WILL WARM AND CALM YOU.

LET ME BE YOUR FREEDOM,
LET DAYLIGHT DRY YOUR TEARS.
I'M HERE, WITH YOU, BESIDE YOU,
TO GUARD YOU AND TO GUIDE YOU...

SAY YOU LOVE ME
EVERY WAKING MOMENT,
TURN MY HEAD WITH
TALK OF SUMMERTIME...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU,
NOW AND ALWAYS...
PROMISE ME THAT ALL YOU SAY IS TRUE --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

LET ME BE YOUR SHELTER,
LET ME BE YOUR LIGHT.
YOU'RE SAFE, NO-ONE WILL FIND YOU --
YOUR FEARS ARE FAR BEHIND YOU...

ALL I WANT IS FREEDOM,
A WORLD WITH NO MORE NIGHT...
AND YOU, ALWAYS BESIDE ME,
TO HOLD ME AND TO HIDE ME...

THEN SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME
ONE LOVE, ONE LIFETIME...
LET ME LEAD YOU
FROM YOUR SOLITUDE...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU HERE,
BESIDE YOU...
ANYWHERE YOU GO, LET ME GO TOO --
CHRISTINE, THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME ONE LOVE,
ONE LIFETIME...
SAY THE WORD
AND I WILL FOLLOW YOU....

SHARE EACH DAY WITH ME,
EACH NIGHT, EACH MORNING...

SAY YOU LOVE ME...
YOU KNOW I DO...
LOVE ME --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

ANYWHERE YOU GO
LET ME GO TOO...
LOVE ME --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU....

Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber
Lyrics: Charles Hart
Additional Lyrics: Richard Stilgoe
Based on the novel by Gaston Leroux

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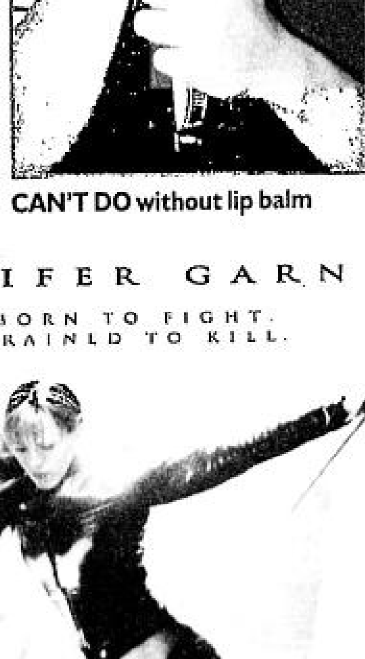
The PHANTOM of the OPERA

Andrew Lloyd Webber's
classic tale of terror,
mystery and romance,
seen by over 8 million
people worldwide,
comes to the big screen
for the first time.

PIOLO: Color me bright

From page A2-4

BODY SHOP brush, Timex watch


CAN'T DO without lip balm

It's very roomy. I think it's a bowling bag. You can put a lot of things inside. I bought two, in different colors, but the one I like most is this one with the red-blue-white combination. What do you know? It matches my favorite shoes!

"Makeup is really important in my kind of work, [where] even guys wear makeup. This makeup kit from Banana Republic is really old. It's small and simple. It reflects my personality."

BELTS. "I'm a big Ben Sherman. Aside from this bag and my shoes, I also own a Ben Sherman belt. I bought it because I like its color—light brown. It goes with any other color. Plus, if you look closely, it has very unique design.

"I bought this white belt in Australia, when I toured with The Hunks last year. I had second thoughts about buying this. I found the silver studs too funky. I'm not really a funky guy. I had to wear it first and really look at the belt for a couple of minutes before I decided to buy it."

SHIRTS. "My all-time favorite is something I bought in Japan four years ago. It was actually the last piece of its kind in the store. I have a hundred white shirts, but I still had to have it. I feel comfortable wearing it.

"The shirts I wear to sleep have always been Hammerhead. I love the fabric, it's very soft.

"But much of my wardrobe is Kenneth Cole. The designs really suit me, and they're always a perfect fit. This striped polo shirt is very significant in 'Dreamboy.' I wore it as Jaime, my third screen character in that movie, who is really close to my heart."

JEANS. "The first thing I consider in buying jeans is comfort. I work for long hours so I have to be comfortable in whatever I'm wearing. I prefer the classic straight-cut type. Sometimes, I wear hipsters. I really prefer simple designs."

WATCHES. "I get most of my watches from Timex. I like this particular piece (shows off an analog watch with brown leather strap) because it goes with any color, and with both casual and formal clothes. The color of the strap is close to the color of my skin, too."

DVD. "My favorite show is 'Smallville.' I brought home from the US a copy of the third season. I also have copies of the first and second seasons. This is the only show that I watch. I like Superman. He fascinates me."

GROOMING

PIOLO/ A2-7

CHINA CRISIS

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Feng Shui Consultation • Little Chinatown
FEBRUARY 1 TO 13

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TRAINED TO KILL.
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MARVEL
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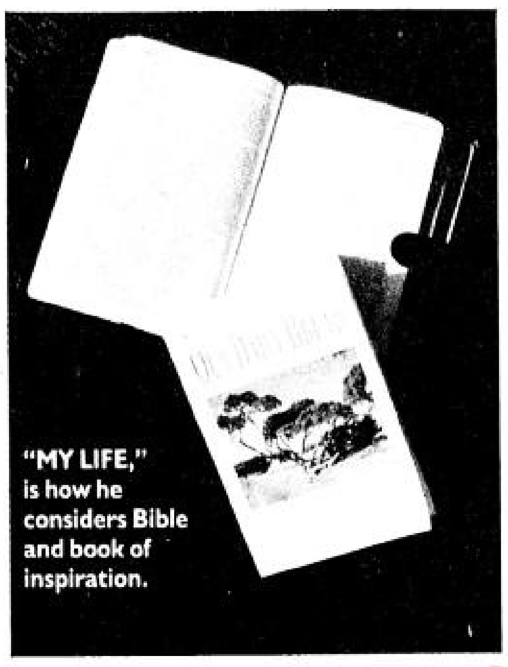
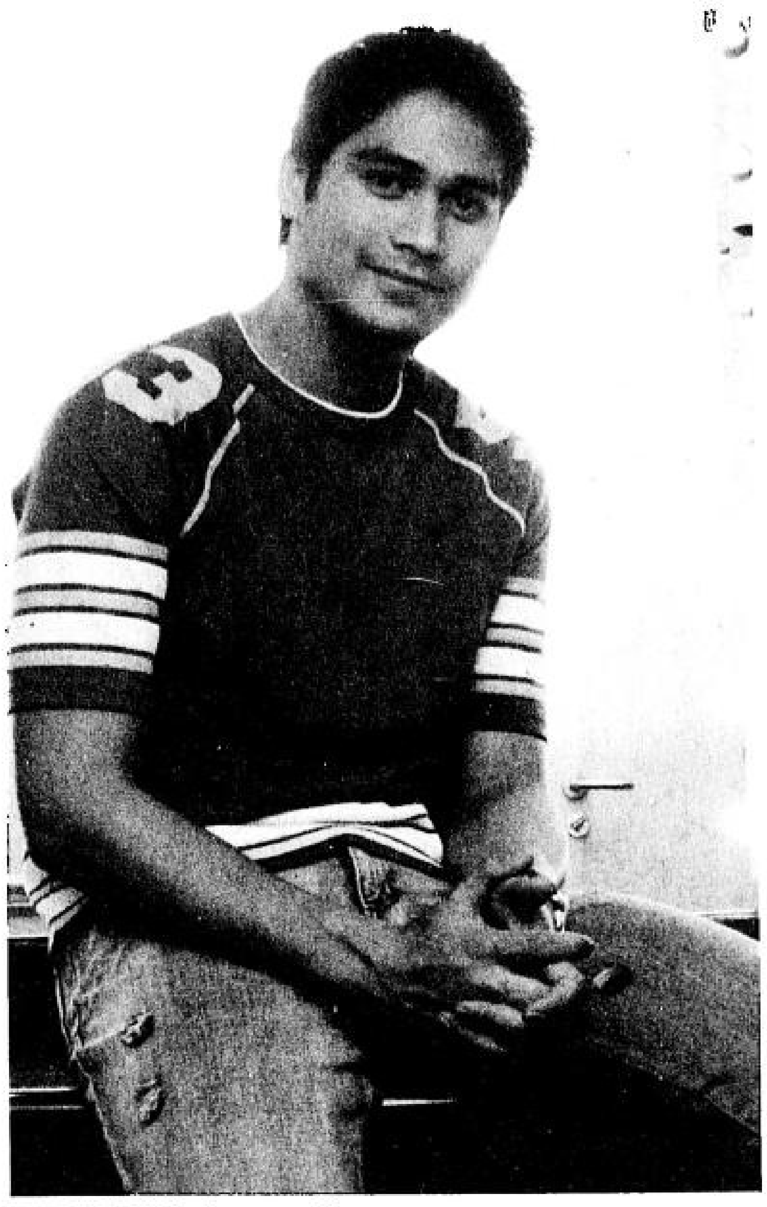
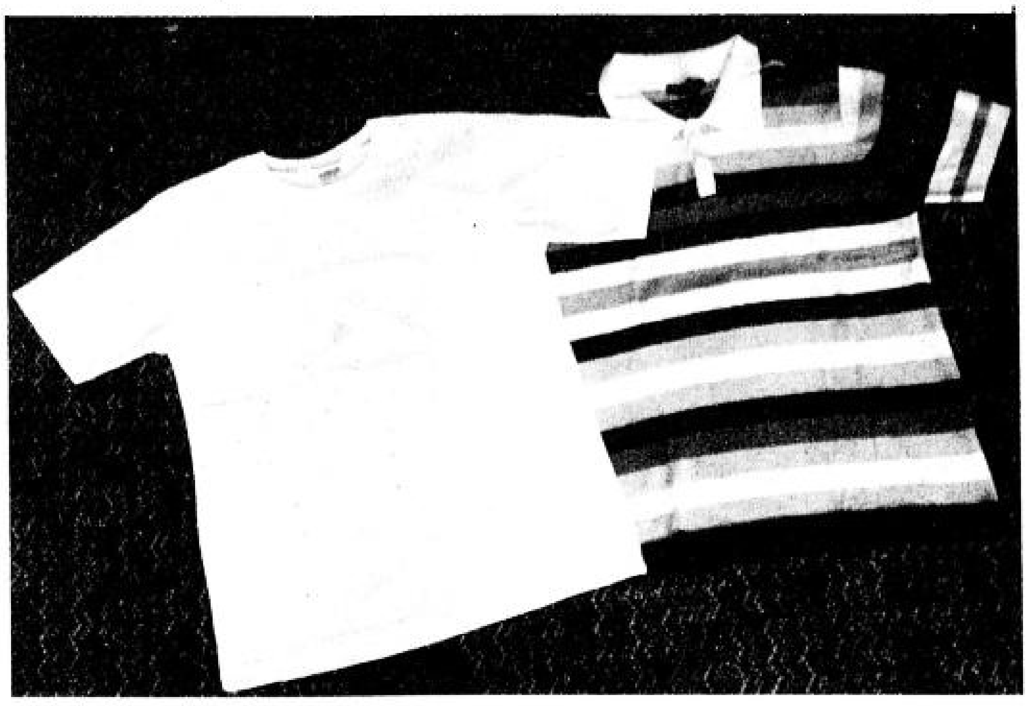


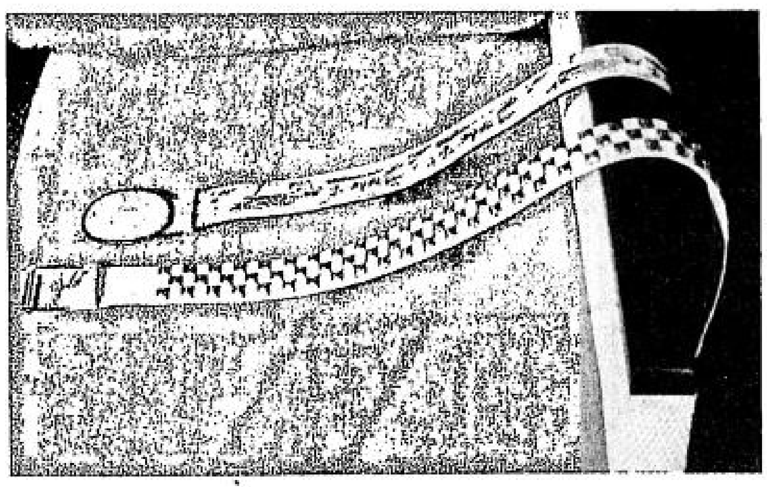
"MY LIFE," is how he considers Bible and book of inspiration.

THE ONLY television show he watches faithfully, "Smallville."



"**SUPERMAN** fascinates me."





STRIPED shirt is one of many Kenneth Coles in his closet. White shirt is a find from Japan.

FUNKY belt with studs made him think twice, but the Ben Sherman (again!) belt was an easy decision.

PIOLO: Color me bright

From page A2-6

TOOLS. "Vaseline Lip Therapy is something I can't live without. I use Carmex and Natural Ice lip balms.

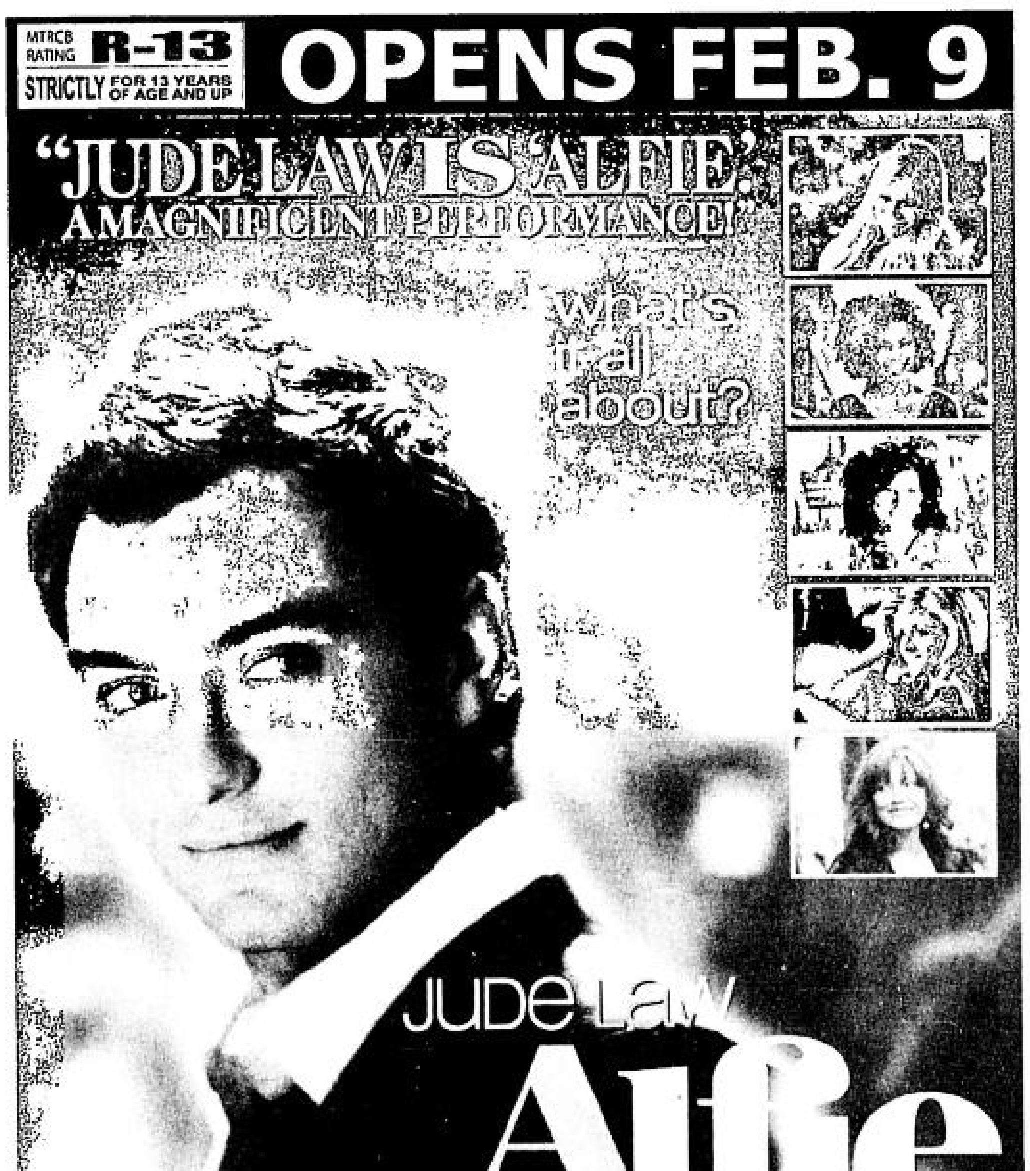
"This hair brush is from Body Shop. I've had this for years. I bought another one only because I thought I lost this."

SCENT. "Hanae Mori is my favorite right now. It's new. I like it because it's not too strong. I want something that lasts for many hours but smells as light as cologne. I've been using this since last December."

After doing nine movies with some of the biggest actresses in local show biz, Piolo says he still feels excited to be working with teenage actress Bea Alonso.

"It's interesting to be doing something like this with someone so raw," he says of Bea. "She has huge potential. She's very good at what she does."

(Piolo and Bea will be seen together in Star Cinema's newest offering, "Dreamboy," which will be shown on Feb. 9. Gilbert Perez directs. The actor also endorses Hammerhead Jeans and Shirts, Timex watches, i2i eyewear, Mendrez shoes and Intensity perfume by First Quadrant.)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EXTENDED!
bathhouse
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FEBRUARY 02 to 08
exclusively at Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA
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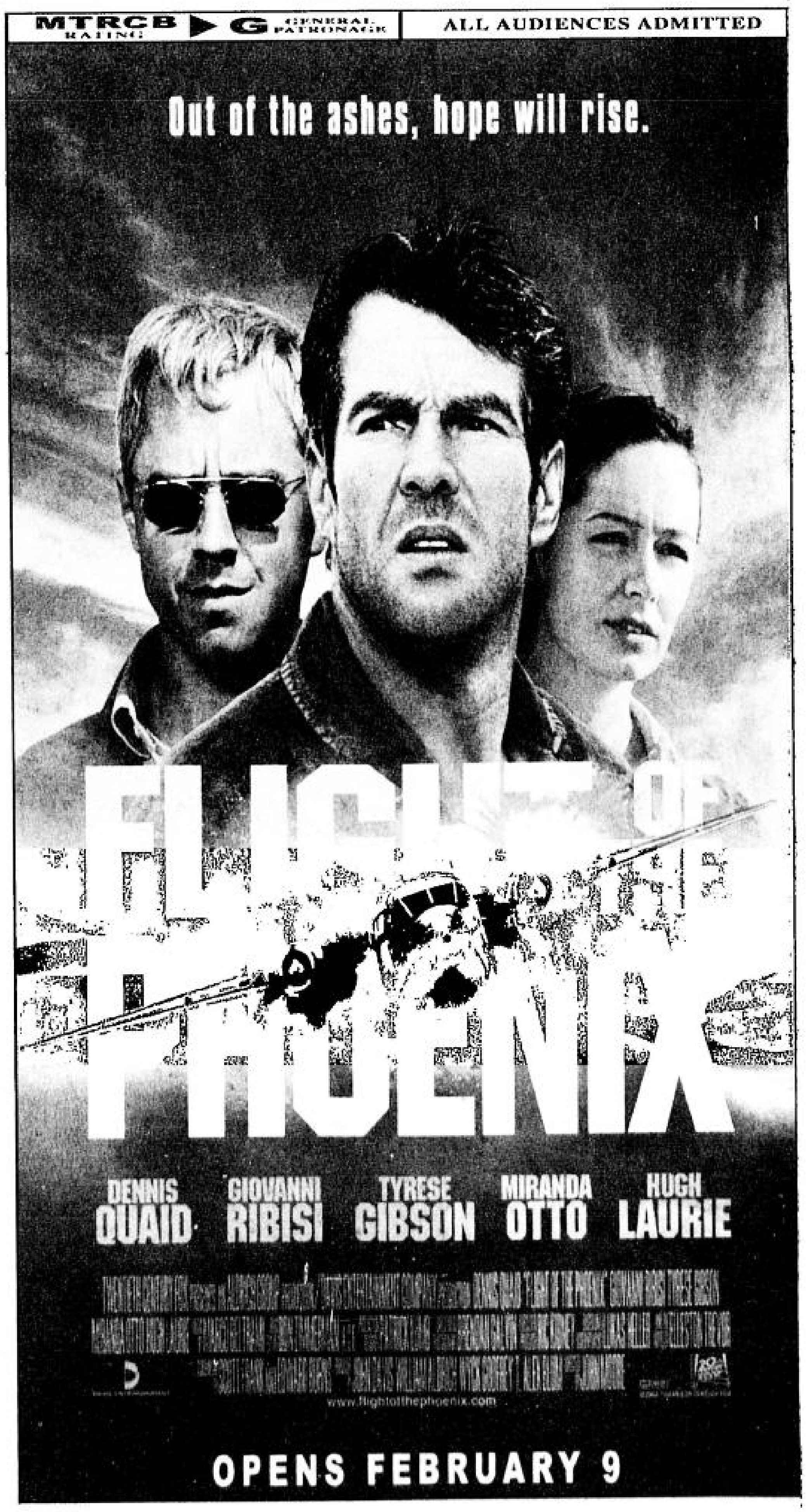
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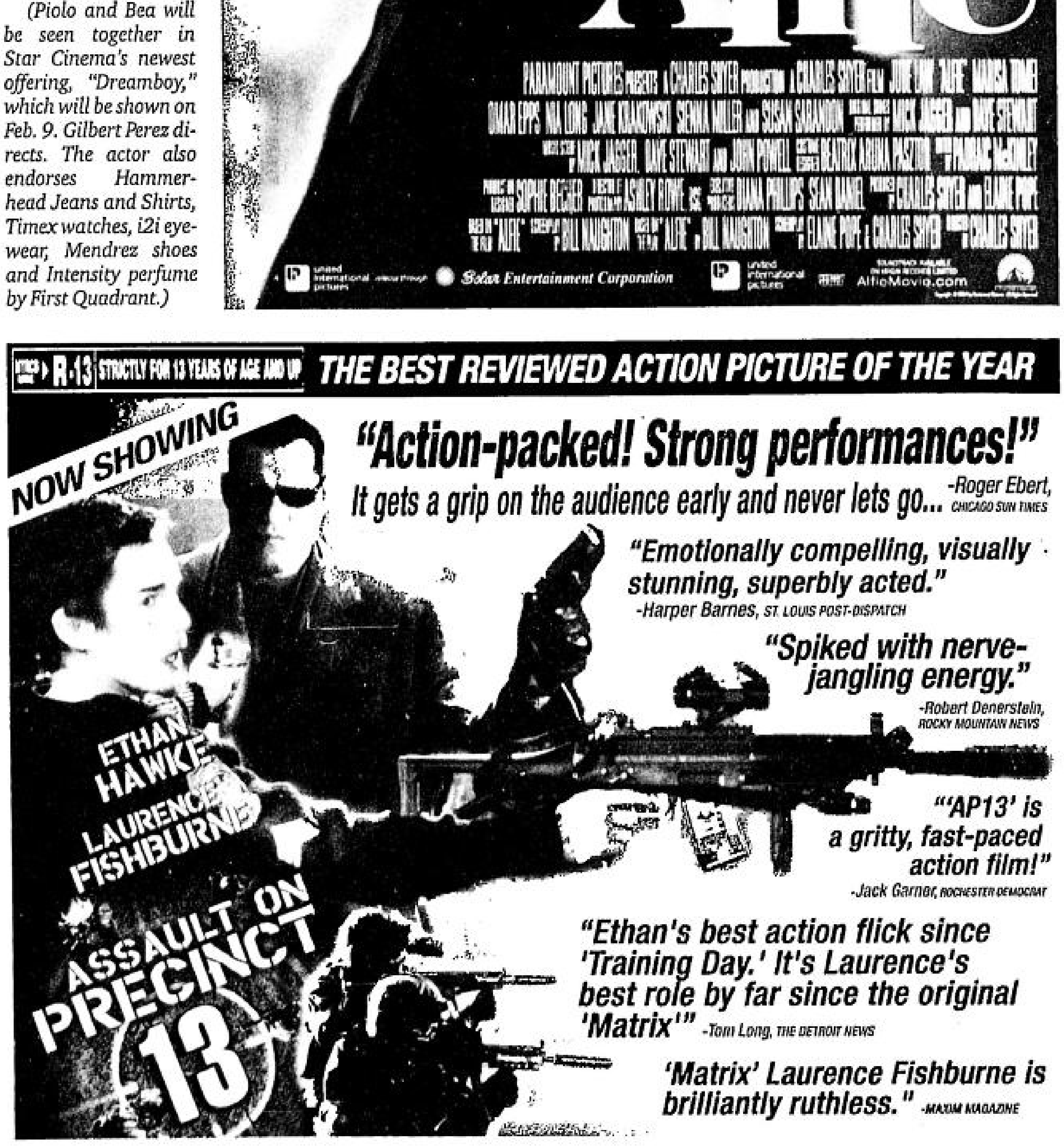
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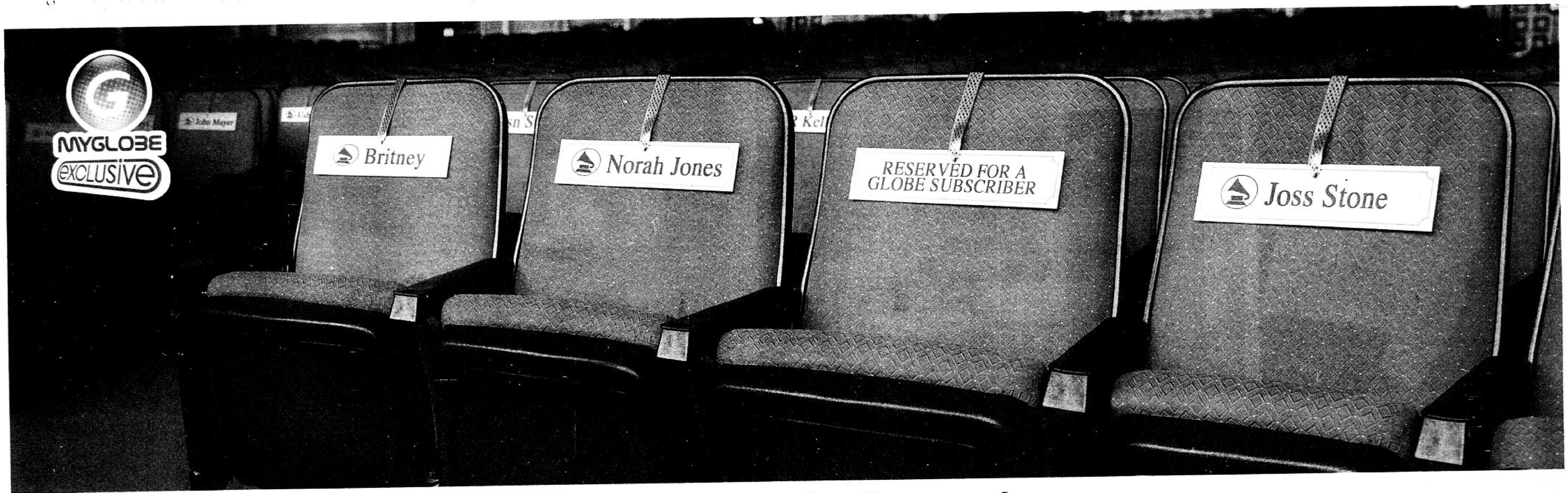
'Matrix' Laurence Fishburne is brilliantly ruthless." -MAXIM MAGAZINE
ETHAN HAWKE
LAURENCE FISHBURNE
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13



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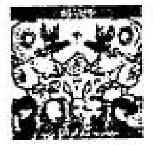
Karma	karma

Norah Jones	Keyword
Sunrise	sunrise
What Am I To You?	watami2u

Maroon 5	Keyword
This Love	thislove
She Will Be Loved	shewillbloved
Ragdoll	ragdoll

Britney Spears	Keyword
Toxic	toxic
Everytime	everytime



Incubus	Keyword
Megalomaniac	megalomaniac
Here In My Room	hereinmyroom

R. Kelly	Keyword
Happy People	happypeople
Step in the Name of Love	stepindaname

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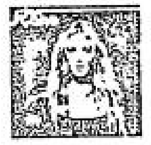
hoobastank THE REASON

Hoobastank	Keyword
The Reason	thereason
Unaffected	unaffected



Joss Stone	Keyword
You Had me	youhadme
Fell In Love With A Boy	fellinlove
Dirty Man	dirtyman

John Mayer	Keyword
Daughter	daughter

Greenday	Keyword
American Idiot	americanidiot
Boulevard of Broken Dreams	brokendreams

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Usher	My Boo Yeah Burn	myboo yeah burn

RINGBACKS: Ringbacks, text **<CODE>** to **2332**. Ex: EA142 ₱30 for 30 days

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If I Ain't Got You	RA017

Maroon 5	Code
Harder To Breathe	RA015
She Will Be Loved	RA032
This Love	RA037

Norah Jones	Code
Those Sweet Words	EA051
Don't Know Why	EA029
Come Away With Me	EA013

Usher	Code
Can U Help Me	RA005
U Remind Me	RA044
U Got It Bad	RA042

R. Kelly	Code
Ignition Remix	RA018
I Believe I Can Fly	RA016
Thoia Thoing	RA035

Britney Spears	Code
Baby One More Time	RA002
Toxic	RA039
Everytime	RA008

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*Winners will be drawn from Metro Manila only. The winner's seat shown above is not the actual seat in the event.

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Honda seen putting up ₱1.3-B bike plant

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MOTORCYCLE maker Honda Philippines Inc. is planning to invest P1.3 billion in a new production facility that will jack up the company's capacity and allow it to corner a bigger share of the growing market for bikes.

According to an industry source, HPI is considering putting up the planned assembly plant in Batangas. Its existing plant, which is in Parañaque City, has the capacity to produce up to 150,000 units of motorcycles.

Company data show that as of April 2003, the Parañaque plant has reached a cumulative production of 680,000 units.

The source, however, did not say how much the planned facility would add to HPI's current capacity.

He said HPI wanted to expand its capacity in view of industry projections that demand for the two-wheeler would hit at least a million units by 2010.

HPI, which started operations in 1983, also plans to export a portion of the motorcycles it is making in the country, the source said.

Industry data show that local motorcycle sales reached a total of 502,450 units in 2004 or 41 percent higher than the 353,981 units sold in 2003.

The more-than-expected growth rate was attributed to the strong demand for alternative modes of transportation amid rising costs of fuel.

Last year, Japanese bikes accounted for 70 percent of total sales with 354,801 units while 147,649 units of non-Japanese models were sold.

HPI accounted for 40 percent of the market, selling 203,411 units in 2004.

Among the Japanese brands, Kawasaki ranked second with 11 percent of the market or 55,762 units; Yamaha was third with 10.5 percent or 53,875 units; and Suzuki was fourth with 8.5 percent or 42,753 units.

Industry players forecast motorcycle sales to reach between 585,000 and 625,000 units this year. This means a market growth of between 16 percent and 25 percent.

Under the existing Investment Priorities Plan, the required minimum outlay for a motorcycle production business to qualify for pioneer status was set at $4 million (about P220 million) and exports of at 30,000 completely-built units a year.

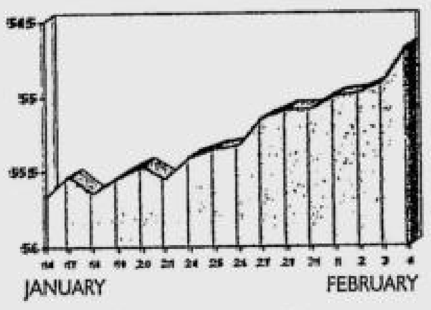
The IPP's specific guidelines allow such investments to include the acquisition of existing assets or facilities, but there is also the requirement for the same project to export at least 30,000 motorbike units a year.

Pioneer status affords beneficiaries incentives such as exemption on import duties for capital equipment and tax holidays.

According to the Board of Investments, the minimum requirements aimed to to entice big investors to do business in the country and at the same time encourage modernization of existing projects.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



₱ 54.68 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 4, 2005

¥ 104.50 = $ 1

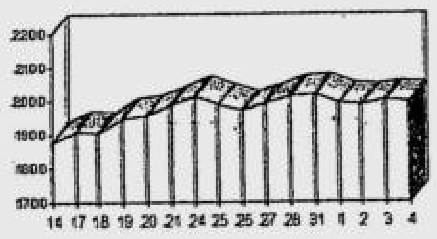
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 4, 2005

GOLD: $415.70-416.20

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 4, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

Stock market seen to resume rally

THE STOCK market is seen to take its cue from corporate earnings this week in the absence of any major developments, analysts said.

They say that the recent weakness in stock prices was temporary and that the market is likely to continue its bull run in the long-term.

The main index took a breather last week, shedding 19 points or less than 1 percent to 1,995.57 last week.

BPI Trade said in a weekly report that the market selling was spread across blue chip firms such as Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Philippine National Bank, Jollibee Foods Corp., Manila Electric Co., ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., San Miguel Corp., JG Summit Holdings, Digital Telecommunications, Petron Corp., DMCI Holdings, SM Prime Holdings, Lepanto Consolidated Mining, Benpres Holdings , Metro Pacific and Belle Corp.

"The market established a new-high in nearly five years last Monday but investors took profits in the following days to take advantage of higher prices on fears that the market is overbought," BPI Trade said in a report.

Banks were the earliest to report their full-year earnings last week. BPI reported a 2004 profit of P6.7 billion, up 16 percent from the previous year's P5.7 billion; Philippine National Bank (PNB), P353.3 million, more than double of P168 million in 2003; Union Bank of the Philippines, P2.28 billion, and China Banking Corp., P2.71 billion in 2004, up from P2.62 billion in 2003.

BPI Trade also said Globe Telecom, which posted a 9-percent increase in profit to P11.3 billion, rebounded as it announced a P20 cash payout and a buy-back plan involving 6.67 percent of its outstanding shares.

Investors also sold their mining shares on reports that the mining industry was able to generate commitment from new foreign investors. Australian mining firms Indophil Resources NL and Climax mining Ltd committed to invest over $700 million in the Philippine mining industry. Earlier, a Philippine roadshow in Beijing fetched $1.3 billion in committed funds for the mining sector. In the meantime, analysts also said the stock market had its share of good news last week. Foremost of which was California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) announcement that it would keep the Philippines on its investment list.

CalPERS, which has an estimated $85-million worth of portfolio investments in the Philippines, was particularly impressed with the government's aggressive reforms, analysts noted. This buoyed the peso to 54.68 to $1 last week.

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STOCK/ B8

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UNLOADING BAD LOANS, ASSETS

BSP hikes provisioning requirements on banks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas will raise the capital provisioning requirement for banks' bad loans, in the hope that such a move would prompt the industry to unload more of their non-performing assets.

BSP Assistant Governor Nestor Espenilla said the Monetary Board of the BSP on Thursday approved the proposal to hike the capital provision for banks' bad loans to pursue the central bank's objective of encouraging the banking industry to get rid of its bad assets.

The increase will be implemented 15 days after the issuance of a BSP circular on this.

The provisioning requirement for non-performing housing loans will be raised from the current 50 percent to 75 percent this year until 2006, and to 100 percent in 2007. The provisioning requirement for all the other types of loans will be raised to 125 percent this year until 2006, and to 150 percent in 2007.

The decision of the BSP to increase the provision for bad loans will call for changes in portions of Circular No. 280, which provides the guidelines on capital provisioning for bad loans.

"This will give them (banks) more motivation to sell their bad loans. If they do not want to allot more provision for their bad loans, then they will have to sell them before it (required capital provision) is raised," Espenilla told reporters in an interview at the sidelines of the seminar on Capital Market Development conducted by the BSP on Saturday.

Raising the capital provision for bad loans of banks is one of the BSP's initiatives to encourage the banking industry to unload its bad assets. It aims to supplement the Special Purpose Vehicle Act of 2003.

The BSP earlier reported that the banking system had unloaded a total of P26.2 billion worth of non-performing assets under the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework in 2004.

The central bank said it had issued a total of 121 certificates of eligibility (COEs) involving the assets transferred under the SPV Act, and that in the last three months of 2004, the amount of assets sold to SPVs climbed to P26.2 billion from only P4.5 billion as of end-September.

Among the biggest deals structured under the SPV framework so far were:

- Land Bank of the Philippines' sale of P13.5 billion worth of non-performing loans to Deutsche Bank-Cargill Financial Services International Inc. and JP Morgan;
- United Coconut Planters Bank's sale of P13.6 billion worth of idle properties to a unit of Korean investment management firm Shinhan M&A;
- Philippine Bank of Communications' sale of P12.156 billion worth of non-performing assets to Unimark Investments Corp., and
- Equitable PCI Bank's sale of P10.5 billion worth of idle assets to Lehman Brothers.

Tourist arrivals hit 2.32M

TOURIST arrivals in the country hit 2.32 million from January to October last year, boosted by the increased arrival of visitors from East Asia.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said almost 1.02 million tourists from Japan, Korea and China visited the Philippines from January to October last year. This was 22.52 percent higher than the previous year's 830,191 visitors from the same countries.

Tourists from East Asia accounted for 47.11 percent of the total tourist arrivals during the 10-month period.

To further boost foreign tourist and *balikbayan* arrivals, and achieve the targeted 5 million visitors by 2010, Durano said the Department of Tourism (DOT) had launched an intensive market-specific promotion drive.

"Promotions are tailored to each target market, taking into consideration the profile of its typical traveler vis-à-vis what our country has to offer," he said.

"By having a distinct marketing strategy for each of the three priority markets—Japan, Korea and China—we hope to get a bigger slice of the emerging market for outbound travelers in these countries," the DOT chief added.

Anchored on the "Wow Philippines" mother brand, the DOT marketing teams crafted sub-campaigns for these key markets, as well as for the *balikbayan* and domestic tourism segments.

In Korea, the marketing program uses the slogan "Feel the Islands," a phrase derived from "Burinara," a popular word in Korea. Advertisements in Japan, in turn, build on the image of the Philippines as a premium resort islands, since studies showed that the words "resort" and "islands" generated positive image in the minds of Japanese tourists. In China, where the word "wow" is both a familiar and common expression of awe and wonder, promotions rely on the "Wow Philippines" phrase.

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Globe's G-Cash nominated for GSM award

GLOBE Telecom holds the distinction of being the only Filipino telecommunications company on this year's short list of nominees for the prestigious GSM Awards.

Globe's G-Cash was nominated for the awards' "Best Mobile Messaging Service" category. It is a breakthrough in mobile commerce, transforming Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers' phones into "mobile wallets." With only a mobile phone and SMS ($0.02 per local text), subscribers can buy goods and services, send money person-to-person, receive domestic fund transfers and international remittances. It is the first and only cashless and card-less payment platform in the Philippines.

G-Cash made it on the short list for "Best Mobile Messaging Service" on the strength of its revolutionary use of SMS or "texting" to facilitate commercial transactions such as purchases, fund transfers and remittances. Globe G-Cash has a unique opportunity to make history as the first winner in this new award category, added only this year.

Since its launch in October 2004, G-Cash has continued to expand its list of merchant partners, including industry leaders in medicine, books, school supplies, retail merchandise, food, and transportation. It continues to expand its cash-handling network, including leading local and international remittance companies, and backed by solid settlement banks.

ABLAZA

More recently, Globe G-Cash pioneered in more mobile commerce applications that enhance consumers' lives and help build the economy. Its tie-up with the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines enables the pilot of the first SMS-based microfinancing effort. This initiative gives small entrepreneurs a secure and convenient means of paying loans to rural banks. By linking up with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Globe G-Cash has also made it possible for owners of businesses to renew their registration through text. G-Cash also enables donations to the Philippine National Red Cross and Unicef, in quick response to calamities such as the recent typhoons in the Philippines and the tsunami in Asia.

"In the final analysis, the single biggest beneficiary of G-Cash is the Filipino people. The m-commerce enabled by G-Cash is tailor-fit to the average Filipino's texting, buying and payment habits, making it as comfortable and easy to use as the mobile phone he now no longer leaves home without. G-Cash empowers consumers by making goods and services, and fund transfers available to them through a medium that they trust and that they are familiar with: the mobile phone," said Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr.

The GSM Association (GSMA) is a worldwide trade organization of GSM mobile operators. Established in 1987, it presently counts 650 mobile operators and more than 150 manufacturers and suppliers worldwide, among its members. Since 1995, GSMA has presented annual awards in recognition of pioneering efforts and services in the global mobile communications industry. Over the past 10 years, these awards have become the industry's premier showcase, highlighting key developments in mobile communication technology.

The GSM Association Awards will take place on Feb. 15 at the Palais des Festivals, Cannes, France.

We have what it takes!

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

AS A businesswoman and advocate for sound business policies, I have learned that it is much wiser not to delimit my concerns within tight parameters and to put equal leverage on the macro perspective.

This awareness is not just applicable to a select few, to CEOs or to managers alone. Micro and small entrepreneurs, as well as subcontractors, must understand the economy even in simple terms, and how it affects one's business. In dreaming big, one would come to realize that millions of pesos in investments are not "a-must" to be able to see the fruits of one's labor be marketed and sold overseas. The challenge is not simple but it is not impossible to achieve either.

Mindanao today has proven its worth in efficiently using its natural gifts to find a niche in the local and international food market, making it the "The Food Basket of the Philippines." Its contribution to the country's exports has been increasing from $1.03 billion in 2000 to $1.32 billion in 2004. Majority of these agri-based products were shipped to Japan, the US, Netherlands, South Korea, Taiwan and Iran.

Of Mindanao's total exports in 2004, Western Mindanao accounted for 2.2 percent; Northern Mindanao, 22.9 percent; Caraga Regions, 3.03 percent, and Central Mindanao, 10.74 percent. Southern Mindanao contributed the biggest share with 61.1 percent. Some $312 million of Southern Mindanao's export receipt came from bananas, particularly Cavendish. Northern Mindanao followed posting $242.67 million worth of bananas exported.

Aside from bananas, Davao Region's top exports include carbon, copra, copper ore concentrates, crude and refined coconut oil, and plywood. The National Statistics Office (NSO) declared that the region's total export receipt in year 2004, as of November, was $807.5 million, up by 8.51 percent from the previous year.

Northern Mindanao's primary exports were grain, fruit, fisheries and vegetable products. It is the second largest contributor to Mindanao exports, amounting to more than $302.8 million last year. The region has total land area of 2.8 million hectares, and some 34 percent is used for agricultural activities.

While the northern area focuses on fruits and vegetable products, the Zamboanga Peninsula and Caraga Region's exporting bets are marine products such as tuna, skipjack and the Atlantic bonito shipped from Surigao City. The combined achievements of both regions amount to $68 million in exports. This should not come as a surprise given that Zamboanga is Mindanao's front door to East Asean economies, having direct sea links to key ports in Malaysia.

Speaking of East Asean, Mindanao's trade relations with Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia have grown at a sustainable rate as the economic ties in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) are explored and expanded.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is one of the government agencies aggressively pushing for the BIMP-Eaga agenda aimed at opening borders and increasing available infrastructure for opportunities in trade and investments to flow in. Recent figures from DTI revealed that Western Mindanao increased its BIM exports to $39 million worth of agricultural and sea products annually, while Northern Mindanao increased its canned pineapple exports every year.

Aside from targeting Eaga countries, Mindanao producers are keeping a watchful eye at China which accounts for only 5 percent of our exports. However, it is good to note that Chinese buyers imported $2.3 billion worth of seafood in 2003. Mindanao's chances of greater access to China is more promising now that its accession in WTO is resulting in major tariff reductions for imported seafood products. What we need is a strategy that will capture the cultural satisfaction and product preference of the Chinese market, establish strong ties with the Chinese government and private sector, and promote Philippine products extensively.

Today, we all know we have what it takes to be an active player in the global market, with our six regions, 25 provinces, 27 cities, 409 municipalities and 10,051 barangays!

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao; a member of the Export Development Council and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission Of Women and National Corn Board, and chair of the Mindanao TVET. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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For the above project, **PACIFIC SUGAR HOLDINGS CORPORATION** is inviting interested General Contractors with experience in the dismantling and shipping of factory equipments, boilers, power generators, warehouses and buildings in a **PREQUALIFICATION PROCESS** to send a **LETTER OF INTENT** and their **COMP0ANY PROFILE** which shall contain a background information about their company, projects done the last 3 years, latest audited financial statements, bank references, permits and licenses (PCAB, SEC, DTI, Mayor's Permit, etc.) and other pertinent informations about their firm.

Interested contractors are requested to prepare two (2) copies of all submissions which should be submitted not later than February 15, 2005 either to our offices in Manila or in Davao City, to the attention of the following:

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Marcopper ordered to release $12-M fund for repair of mine structures

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment an Natural Resources is set to issue a demand letter compelling Marcopper Philippines Inc. to release the $12-million rehabilitation fund needed to repair vital mine structures.

In 1996, mine tailings from the Marcopper facility in Boac, Marinduque province, found its way into a local river causing an environmental disaster.

A team of American experts recently studied the area and recommended the immediate rehabilitation of the mine structures in Marinduque.

DENR Secretary Michael Defensor on Saturday said that the structures, particularly four vital dams, should be repaired immediately to avert another disaster.

"Based on the independent evaluation of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), repairs must be done and we will issue a demand letter for strict compliance of Marcopper to repair and extend the remediation funds," Defensor said.

Defensor said the $12-million rehabilitation fund had been in escrow with an international bank before Marcopper's mother firm, Placer Dome, decided to transfer the fund to E Holdings of businessman Teodoro Bernardino—the current majority shareholder in Marcopper.

Some P62 million had been released to the local government units in Marinduque to compensate the affected residents.

Nine years after the environmental disaster, some of the rivers in Marinduque still have to fully recover from the tailings spill. To this day, Marcopper has not undertaken an extensive cleanup of the area.

According to a member of the US team, Dr. Hugh Miller of Arizona, four mine tailings dams—the Maguilaguila, Bol River Dam, and the Upper and Lower Makalupnit Dams—all appear to have structural flaws.

Another member, Dr. Geoff Plumlee, said that a strong typhoon or heavy rains could actually bring down these structures and release the mine wastes which would again put the surrounding communities in peril.

In his report, Plumlee noted that the contents of the acid mine from Marcopper's Tapian pit, were winding up in the Boac River, affecting the quality of water in the area.

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Central Colleges of the Philippines Inaugurates New College of Nursing Building

Soon after the celebration of its 50th year, the Central Colleges of the Philippines marked January 24, 2005 as the formal inauguration date of its recently built College of Nursing Building.

The building was named after the "Consorcia P. Reyes Hall" on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the honoree. Over 250 guests attended the ceremony on the roof deck of the Consorcia P. Reyes Hall. The affair was highlighted by the attendance of distinguished guests such as CHED representatives and distinguished University Presidents and Chairmen from CEU, FEU, JRU, MIT, MLQU, NU, Perpetual Help, TIP, UE, as well as **Senator Edgardo Angara** (the guest of honor), **Mayor Jejomar Binay**, Father Joaquin Bernas S.J. (who concelebrated the mass), **Sec. Obet Pagdanganan**, **Press Secretary Ignacio R. Bunje**, **Spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen**, and **Congressmen Antonino, Cerilles, Crisologo, Golez, Valencia** among others.

The building houses the largest Nursing Skills Laboratory in the country as well as completely equipped anatomy-physiology, microbiology-parasitology, chemistry and physics laboratories as well as airconditioned classrooms and a multi-purpose gymnasium.

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Q: BAKIT NAMIN IPINAGLALABAN ANG KASONG ITO?

A: DAHIL ANG MALILIIT NA CONSUMER AY MAAAPEKTUHAN NITO, ANG MGA MAY KONSUMO NG MAS MABABA SA 100 KWH.

Ipinag-utos ng Court of Appeals (CA) kamakailan ang pagbawi sa desisyon ng Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) ayon sa paghimay ng Meralco bill. Ang ruling na ito ay mangangahulugang babalik ang PPA, mawawala ang lifeline subsidy, at tataas ang presyo ng kuryente. Mapipilitang magbayad ang mga Meralco customers na kumukunsumo ng 0-100 kWh ng dagdag na higit sa P100 buwan-buwan, at isauli ang halagang aabot sa halos P2,000 para sa mga buwan mula June 2003 hanggang sa ngayon.

Sa panahon ngayon, ayaw ng Meralco na dagdagan pa ang pahirap ng maliliit na customers. Ito ang dahilan kaya't iaapela ng Meralco ang desisyon ng CA sa Supreme Court, sa ngalan ng transparency at pagpapahalaga sa mas maliliit na customers.

Hinihingi po namin ang inyong pag-unawa at suporta sa bagay na ito. Ginagawa po namin ang lahat upang patuloy na magkaroon ng liwanag ang ating buhay. Maraming salamat po.

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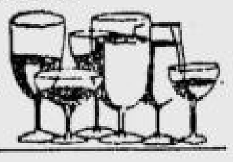

Victor C. Agustin

ADVANCE Merry Christmas to the lucky few who were able to wangle allocations for the secondary offering of Semirara, which glowed like a, well, hot coal, closing nearly 35 percent up in Friday's resumed trading.

Only goes to prove that even a monkey—Jose Antonio Leviste and the National Development Co. excluded—can make money in a bullish market.

Both Semirara and parent company DMCI Holdings did a wonderful job of spinning to whet the appetite of the market, by claiming that:

(1) The overseas private placements to institutional investors had been oversubscribed by nine times;

(2) DMCI even had to reduce the shares allocated to foreigners and channel the rest to the local, arguably mutinous, brokers; and,

(3) "Due to the demand for more shares," DMCI had to sell an "additional" 11.296 million shares, on top of the 62.5 million shares that the Philippine Stock Exchange had approved for the secondary offering.

Then, almost as an afterthought, Semirara on Friday disclosed that "only 46.875 million shares were to be listed" on that day. Meaning, despite all the over-subscription-and-additional-allocation hype, about 15.6 million shares had actually gone unsold.

This 15.6 million bloc, worth over P750 million as of Friday's closing, presumably had gone back to parent DMCI, whose market value should also exponentially rise, in billions by the book, in tandem with the Semirara's 35 percent price jump. After all, DMCI still owns over 60 percent of Semirara.

Strangely, DMCI closed Friday 40 centavos even lower.

An investment banker, trying to divine the market behavior, said that investment banks as a rule prefer to invest directly in listed subsidiaries, rather than their listed holding companies, to avoid what is euphemistically referred to as "revenue leakage."

Blinded by the Sun

MARKET leaders and fierce rivals Smart-Piltel and Globe Telecom-Innove have formed an unusual alliance to block newcomer Sun Cellular's unlimited call-and-text plan.

Globe Telecom, ironically, the object of a "predatory pricing" complaint by the provincial landline telephone companies for its nationwide flat-rate plan, is using the same predatory-pricing argument in a hush-hush complaint with the National Telecommunications Commission to stop the popular Sun Cellular offering.

Sun chief counsel William Pamintuan even went to the extent of quoting Globe's defense, citing Globe chief counsel Rodolfo Salalima's definition of predatory pricing as "an anti-competitive measure employed by a dominant company to get/protect market share from new or existing competitors."

Between themselves, Smart-Piltel and Globe-Innove already account for more than 95 percent market share, with newcomer Sun, accounting for the balance, trying to buy market share with its price-busting scheme ironically similar to Smart's when it was still competing with Piltel.

Ironically, both Smart-Piltel and Globe-Innove maintain that there is no way subscriber-short Sun could make money on such a generous offer.

Gay car gets home

PEUGEOT 206 cc, voted "Gay Car of the Year" by a French website, and the acclaimed 307 will finally get a Makati showroom, with the opening tomorrow of the AutoFrance Philippines headquarters on Sen. Gil Puyat Ave.

Handicapped by the strong euro, Peugeot is trying to move local inventory with select marketing tie-ups, like offering the French coupe-cabriolet as a grand prize for a SmartGold promo in connection with the Feb. 12-14 America concert at the NBC Tent.

Money-go-round

- COMPETITION among Makati supermarkets is getting tougher.

The new WalterMart in front of Don Bosco, which has American-sized covered parking slots and driveway in addition to American-sized supermarket alleys, is offering free parking for customers anytime, any day, on a minimum P500 purchase.

More upside: The supermarket is relatively un-crowded, compared with the throngs that swamp the Ayala Center competition. There is a large waiting area, for a change.

Downside: No upright and large carts to haul grocery items.

- CAP "white knight" Romeo Roxas and his Green Square Properties were rebuffed in October 2001 by the Supreme Court for insisting on filing an ownership claim on 50,497 hectares of Sierra Madre land. The "Spanish title," on which Roxas had anchored his claim, had already been nullified by the Supreme Court way back in 1996.

Heard through the grapevine

THE FROSTY relations between insurance tycoon Robert Coyiuto Jr. and Lucio Tan ally Macario Te have taken a turn for the worse, with Te and his son Anthony both resigning from the board of Coyiuto's, and now Gokongwei's, Oriental Petroleum and Mineral Corp.

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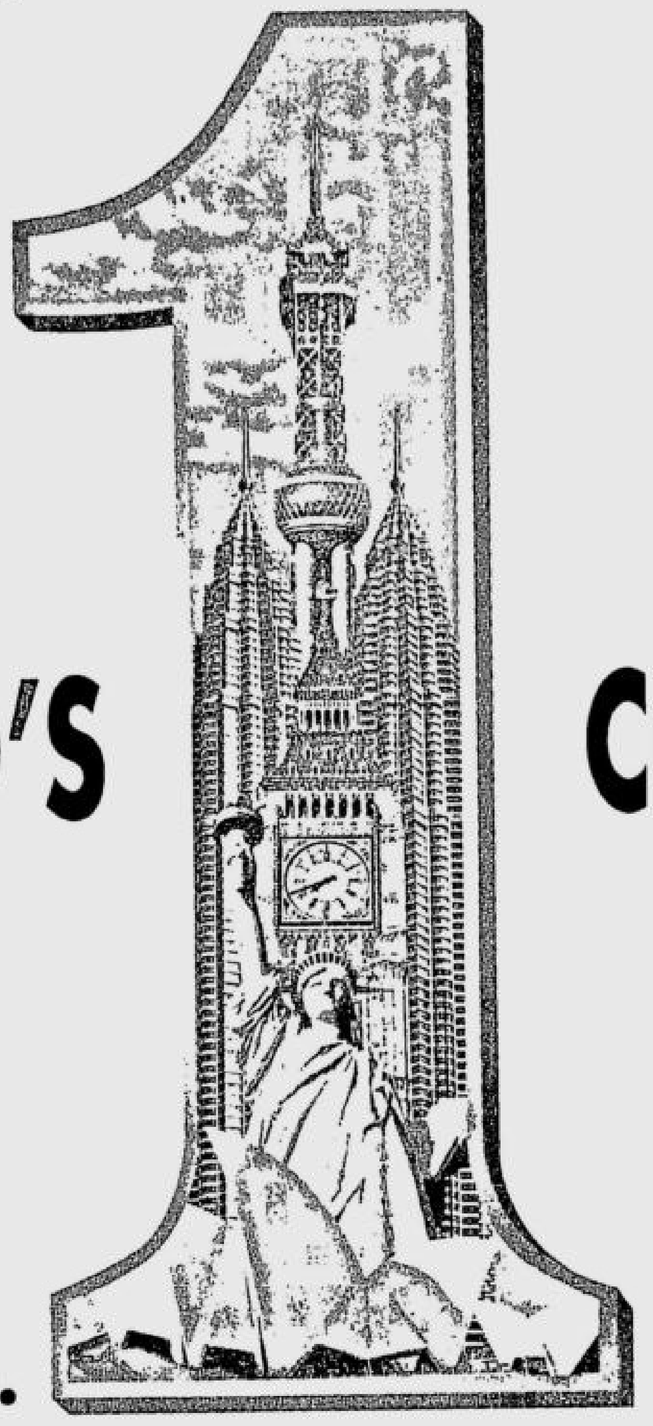

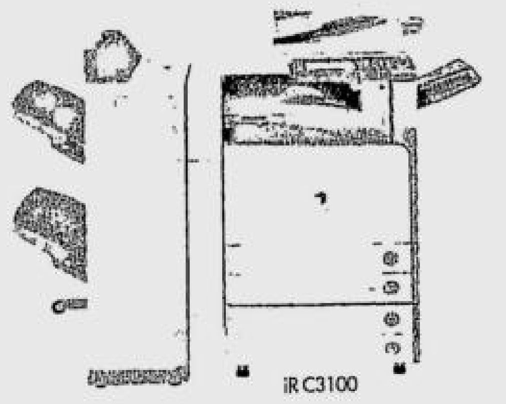

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*Source: according to "Gartner Dataquest, May 2004[illegible]", Canon copiers have the no. 1 market share in the world in terms of the total units' sales of plain paper copiers in black and white and color, analogue and digital categories (Data for 2003) Worldwide market excluding Canada, South America, Middle East and Africa

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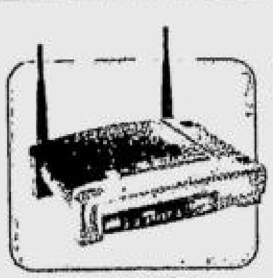
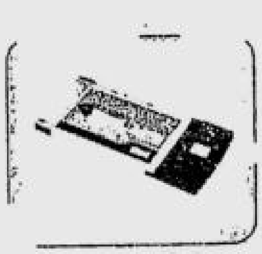


Model: WRT54G

Wireless-G Broadband Router
✓ All-in-one Internet-sharing Router, 4-port Switch, and Wireless-G (802.11g) Access Point
✓ Shares a single Internet connection and other resources with Ethernet wired and Wireless-G clients
✓ Wireless data rates up to 54Mbps - 5 times as fast as Wireless-B (802.11b), but also interoperable with Wireless-B devices (at 11Mbps)
✓ Advanced security: Wi-Fi Protected Access™ (WPA), wireless MAC address filtering, powerful SPI firewall



Model: WPC54G

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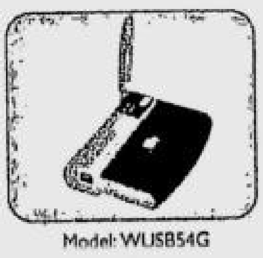

Model: WUSB54G

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✓ Also compatible with Wireless-B networks (at 11Mbps)
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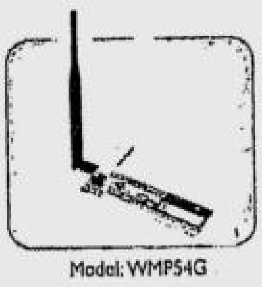

Model: WMP54G

Wireless-G PCI Adapter
✓ Wireless-G (802.11g) connectivity for your desktop PC
✓ Incredible data rates up to 54Mbps in the 2.4GHz radio band
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VAT a mess!

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

SO THE SENATE now favors a multi-tiered value-added-tax (VAT).

Poor Willy Parayno. Here is one determined public servant who is at the brink of having the BIR finally get its act together and equip it to tighten up tax collection, including the existing VAT. All this, thanks to a comprehensive taxpayer computer database that has taken years to put in place, along with benchmarking studies that now permit the BIR to determine how much VAT collections can be reasonably expected from firms in specific industries.

But before it can even put the system into full gear and use it to flush out substantial uncollected VAT revenues, developments in the Senate threaten to throw the bureau off balance again by further complicating the job of administering the VAT, through the use of multiple rates. It's like asking your driver to spend hours waxing the car, and just as he's about to complete the job, a shower comes pouring down on it. Only it's not the rain doing it, but it's you aiming the garden hose on the car. You can imagine how the driver must feel. (And you'd understand if he might just decide to stop waxing the car altogether.)

Good work at BIR

Believe it or not, the BIR is up to something. While many of us have never been enamored with the BIR all these years, one has to look at the agency up close, and at the right places, to appreciate that it is not entirely the den of wolves it is often made out to be. Colleagues from Ateneo and the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) were with me recently in a visit to the BIR to be briefed by Commissioner Parayno and some of his top officials on the work of their Business Intelligence Task Force. Our aim was to find out how an economic reform project that we at Ateneo and our NGO partners are undertaking can be of help in the BIR's ongoing efforts to improve tax administration. What we learned was very encouraging.

After many years of false starts and aborted systems, the BIR computerization program has reached a stage when it can make use of its extended database to effectively weed out tax evaders. Don't ask what took them so long. What's important is that they can now do it. The extended database now includes records from the LTO and the SEC, among a growing list of others, which will allow the agency to match the taxpayers' tax declarations with third party information like motor vehicles owned and shares of stock in corporations.

Doctors exposed

Putting all available data to good use, the BIR has detected thousands of rather flagrant misdeclarations. The "snapshots" they shared with us (with identities concealed, of course) were very interesting. From data on official receipts 'texted' in by the public for their e-Raffle Promo, for example, they have identified a doctor whose patients texted in receipts totaling about P658,000 in value—obviously just a small fraction of what he made during the year—but paid a total income tax of only P3,254. Or another one who had a few patients text in receipts totaling P175,300, but declared zero income tax—and on top of that, used fake receipts, i.e. those not registered with the BIR. Another snapshot: most of the doctors operating in one of the well-known hospitals for the affluent reported annual incomes less than P1 million. Only two declared incomes exceeding P5 million. You can understand why doctors' exemption from the VAT is so much under fire.

More cheats

They've also been closely watching the telecom industry dealers. We're not talking of your little neighborhood pre-paid card reseller, but those distributors who buy billions of pesos worth of "load" from Globe, Smart and Sun for eventual resale to the general public. Some of them either don't realize, or don't care, that the telcos routinely report to the BIR how much "load" has been sold to them. One of them who bought P13 billion from the telcos in 2003 reported no such purchase to BIR, and thus paid no VAT. Similar glaring discrepancies have been unearthed for the others (26 such dealers handle over a billion pesos worth each). Mr. Parayno tells me that while they may have a relatively thin slice of value added to pay VAT on, hundreds of millions of pesos in VAT revenues are still involved due to sheer volume.

And then there are the security agencies. One of them declared an income of less than P2 million with BIR, but reported an income of more than P166 million to the PNP (as they are required to do). Others being watched include stockbrokers, insurance companies, banks, merchants of credit card companies, and government contractors. Third party information now makes it easy for the BIR to check the veracity of the tax declarations filed by these enterprises. And the BIR is hot on their trail, with over 8,000 Letter Notices (LNs) automatically printed by their computers having already been mailed out. Over a thousand have so far led to voluntary increased declarations, yielding P1.3 billion in additional revenues. The thousands of others who have ignored the LNs, thinking they can sit it out as BIR is not efficient enough to pursue their case, will be in for a surprise.

Keep it simple

It will take a few more years for these promising initiatives to yield the additional revenues in the magnitudes we needed yesterday to avert fiscal collapse. Thus, government has to pin its hopes on the 2-percentage point hike in the VAT. But let's not mangle it with multiple tiers, which will only throw a monkey wrench into the current BIR efforts to tighten up VAT enforcement. It will also make it so much harder for VAT taxpayers to prepare and file their VAT returns, inviting the temptation to just evade it even more. And because the new complication would again set back BIR's just-completed system, they may yet get away with it.

Ateneo's first Eagle Watch Economic and Political Briefing for 2005 will be on Wednesday, Feb. 9 at the Linden Suites, Ortigas Center at 8:30-12 noon. Call Lea Neri at 426-5661 or e-mail me at chabito@ateneo.edu for details. There will be lunch, but sorry—like it says above, it won't be free.

GMA-7, Zoe ink block time deal

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA Network Inc. has clinched a production and block time deal with Zoe Broadcasting Network, owned by Jesus is Lord Movement.

This practically provides GMA Network an extension network that can help boost the company's profitability.

GOZON

GMA president Felipe Gozon said the agreement allowed GMA Network's wholly-owned Citynet Marketing and Productions Inc. to produce and supply shows daily to Channel 11 starting the third quarter of this year.

"This will contribute substantially to our revenue and profits. I can't disclose the numbers but just imagine that it is like having another station that will air the shows we will produce," said Gozon in an interview.

Under the agreement, Citynet will provide television programs and shows to Channel 11, while Zoe Broadcasting Network will make Channel 11's daily airtime available.

Gozon said the shows would be entirely different from those shown by Channel 7.

The GMA executive said it was Zoe Broadcasting that chose GMA over other networks.

"We are very fortunate to be given this project by Zoe. I think others have tried in the past but without us having to make any offer, Zoe chose us," said Gozon.

GMA, in return, agreed to help Zoe Broadcasting in improving its station's technical capabilities. Under the deal, GMA will provide Zoe Broadcasting the technical services, facilities, and equipment needed to operate and maintain Channel 11.

"We look forward to the positive impact this partnership can extend not only to the television industry but also in nation building," said Zoe Broadcasting president Eddie Villanueva.

The agreement was signed by Zoe's Villanueva and Citynet president Gilberto Duavit.

Villanueva said the deal with GMA should improve Channel 11's program line-up with the introduction of more shows.

"We will do everything that needs to be done so that soon, Channel 11 will experience what GMA Network has achieved so far," Gozon said.

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Canyon Woods	160,000	100,000
Capitol Hills	120,000	
Cebu Country Club	1,650,000	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports	130,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu		Pls. Call
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Eastridge A/B*	120,000/130,000*	
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	130,000/220,000**	160,000*
Luisita Golf		250,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	
Manila Polo	2,250,000	
Manila Southwoods A/B*	400,000/Pls. Call*	350,000/640,000*
Makati Sports Club	Pls. Call	185,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000/200,000*	110,000
Mimosa C2/C3*	220,000	260,000*
Mimosa Golf Ind.		130,000
Mt. Malarayat A/B*	190,000	150,000/300,000*
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Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	120,000/150,000*/200,000**	
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Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/110,000*/180,000**	
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,400,000	1,500,000*
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Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	340,000
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	650,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	
Valle Verde Ind.	120,000	
Valley Golf	Pls. Call	
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Baguio Country Club		550,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	50,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	70,000
Camp John Hay	170,000	200,000
Canlubang	450,000	550,000
Canyon Woods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	100,000	120,000
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,900,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	130,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	230,000
Eagleridge "B"		300,000
Eagleridge "C"		330,000
Forest Hills "A"		130,000
Forest Hills "B"		190,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	240,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	Please Call	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,500,000	-
Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,250,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	300,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	650,000	-
Manila Yacht Club	-	350,000
Metroclub "A"	100,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	140,000	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	-	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	350,000	450,000
Quezon City Sports Club	140,000	160,000
Rockwell	230,000	300,000
Spa & Lodge	500,000	650,000
Sta Elena "A"	1,000,000	1,400,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	170,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	350,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	800,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	700,000
The Palms Country Club	500,000	-
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	120,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	-	200,000
Valley Golf	200,000	300,000
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Security Bank profit up 20%

SECURITY Bank Corp. said its net income had increased by 20 percent in 2004 to P757 million from P631 million earned in 2003.

This translated to higher earnings per share of P2.30 from P1.91 in 2003.

This was achieved despite an aggressive build-up of provisions for probable losses amounting to P1.2 billion during the year, an increase of P279 million from the previous year's P929 million. The provisions were undertaken in line with efforts to further strengthen the bank's balance sheet. The bank's pre-provision operating profit (PPOP) amounted to P2.1 billion, translating to a POPP ROE of 19 percent, one of the highest in the industry.

As of the end of 2004, the bank had one of the lowest non-performing loans ratio at 6.7 percent, a continued and significant improvement from the 2003 ratio of 7.6 percent, and better than the reported industry average of 13 percent. The build-up in provisions resulted in raising its cover for non-performing loans to 63 percent from 56 percent in 2003.

Alberto S. Villarosa, Security Bank president and chief executive, said: "We are extremely pleased with the 2004 financial results; and the fact that we are well on track in our three-year strategic plan. We had strong earnings from our interest differential business during the year emanating from an expanded portfolio of investment securities and our diligent focus on increasing our low cost deposit base."

He added that the growth in net margins was supplemented by fee-based income from service charges, fees and commissions, resulting in healthy revenues of P4.9 billion, up 21 percent from last year's P4 billion. The increase in operating expenses represented taxes resulting from the growth in revenue base.

Total assets of the bank grew by 21 percent to P89.1 billion from the previous year's P73.5 billion, funded by an 11-percent growth in deposits that reached close to P55 billion. The asset build-up was derived from the 73-percent growth in the portfolio of investment securities to P34.9 billion from P20.2 billion in 2003. Loan volumes also rose by 10 percent to P41.3 billion from P37.6 billion.

The bank's capital funds stood at P10.6 billion, while free capital, defined as capital funds net of NPAs, bank premises and equity investments amounted to P3.2 billion. Villarosa said Security Bank was one of only five banks with positive free capital among the private domestic commercial banks at yearend 2004.

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As of February 04, 2005

CLUB	SELLING	BUYING
Alta Vista "B"		250K
Baguio Country Club	500K	please call
Camp John Hay	-	170K
Canlubang Golf Club		450K
Canyon Woods	120K	
Capitol Hills "A"	100K	please call
Celebrity Sports Club	120K	-
Club Filipino	150K	-
Club Punta Fuego	450K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "A"	200K	150K
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	200K	-
Eagleridge Golf Club "C"	280K	
Fontana "B"	40K	
Hacienda Luisita "B"	please call	please call
Makati Sports Club	200K	
Manila Golf Club Indv.		11.2M
Manila Polo Club	2.2M	2M
Manila Southwoods "B"		670K
Manila Yacht Club	200K	
Mimosa C-3	300K	
Orchard Golf Club "A"	150K	
Orchard Golf Club "B"		280K
Quezon City Sports Club	150K	
Riviera Golf Club "A"	70K	please call
Riviera Golf Club "B"		140K
Rockwell Leisure Club	280K	
Spa & Lodge	550K	500K
Sta Elena Golf Club "A"	please call	
Sta Elena Golf Club "B"		1.5M
The Country Club at TH	430K	370K
Tagaytay Highlands	760K	
Tagaytay Midlands	please call	650K
The Palms Country Club	500K	
Valley Golf Club		230K
Wack Wack Golf Club		6.2M

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 4, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	41,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30.5	31.5	30	31.5	542,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57	57	56	56	1,135,600
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46	46.5	45	45	53,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	350,000
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.25	54,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	1,116,400
Philippine National Bank	27	27	26.5	26.5	62,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	15	14.5	15	4,000
Security Bank Corp.	30.5	31	30	30	31,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	29.5	29	29	6,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2400	2420	2400	2420	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2	2	2	1,651,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	120	120	120	120	240
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1765	1765	1765	1765	330
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	17.25	17.25	17	17	30,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.64	1.64	1.5	1.52	37,539,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	945	950	930	945	90,600
Ipeople Inc	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	333,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.049	0.049	1,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	8,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	60,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.8	3.85	5,794,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1390	1405	1390	1405	268,350
Ivantage Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	70,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	28,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.75	17	17	13,800
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	26.5	25.5	26	675,100
Petron Corporation	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	2,552,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.7	1.7	1.58	1.58	940,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.82	701,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.5	1,209,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	130,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	270,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	2,400,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.89	0.89	110,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.55	21,828,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.5	1.68	1.4	1.4	250,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	137,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	93,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	1,337,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	619,200
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	14,000
RFM Corp.	0.78	0.9	0.78	0.84	1,960,000
Swift Food, Inc.	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.35	420,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	55,300
San Miguel Corp. B	76.5	76.5	76	76.5	62,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	700,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	39,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	6,217,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.98	1	0.78	0.8	13,300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	308,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.029	3,300,000
A. Soriano Corporation	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	373,000
APC Group Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.36	0.39	14,960,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.008	176,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.37	0.37	120,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.87	0.87	0.83	0.83	190,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	20	20	20	20	4,100
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	600,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1	1.02	29,010,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.21	0.21	3,240,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,740,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.47	81,760,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	5.8	6.1	5.2	5.4	21,908,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	4,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.18	418,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp	9	9	9	9	1,893,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	44.5	45.5	44	44.5	3,181,200
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	170,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.08	0.08	15,700,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.14	1.16	2,091,000
Ionics Inc.	1.86	2.02	1.86	1.86	3,777,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	3.15	3.2	3	3	931,000
Keppel Holdings	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	270,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.48	4,302,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	30,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	600,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.48	0.49	46,700,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	470,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	60,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	370,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	390,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.16	0.185	1,930,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.225	0.225	1,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.2	1.2	1	1	21,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.88	1.98	1.8	1.8	493,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	300,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	1,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.66	4,930,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.04	1.04	1,208,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.57	460,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	3,450,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	17.25	17.25	17	17	325,300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.1	44,094,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	70,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	7,290,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.185	0.16	0.16	4,180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.44	9,970,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	5,206,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	90,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	850,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	50,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.1	2,030,000
Primex Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	120,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.21	1,840,000
SM Development Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.52	1.58	911,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	1,488,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.95	0.95	0.79	0.79	720,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.9	0.9	0.85	0.85	210,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	139,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8	7.2	7.4	972,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.8	9.8	9.4	9.4	173,000
Benguet Corp. B	12	12	12	12	2,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.5	4.5	4	4.4	169,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.4	21,460,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.49	0.49	0.45	0.45	25,560,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.025	0.022	0.023	368,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.036	0.036	0.033	0.033	551,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	379,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.22	1.22	1.1	1.14	6,744,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.56	1.6	1.46	1.48	14,101,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	46	52	46	48.5	18,793,800
United Paragon Mining Co	0.39	0.39	0.35	0.37	1,510,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	45,600,000
Interport Res.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	27,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	75,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	84,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.3	0.31	2,640,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	36,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.09	0.105	0.09	0.1	15,550,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	2,630,000

CURRENCIES

February 6, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.770654	1.000000	54.9140
Japan	Yen	0.007377	0.009572	0.5256
United Kingdom	Pound	1.450755	1.882500	103.3756
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098804	0.128208	7.0404
Switzerland	Franc	0.641356	0.832224	45.7007
Canada	Dollar	0.620994	0.805802	44.2498
Singapore	Dollar	0.470628	0.610687	33.5353
Australia	Dollar	0.593312	0.769882	42.2773
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.044283	2.652661	145.6682
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205502	0.266660	14.6434
Brunei	Dollar	0.469195	0.608828	33.4332
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000109	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.020017	0.025974	1.4263
UAE	Dirham	0.209850	0.272301	14.9531
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.297600	71.2564
Argentina	Peso	0.264239	0.342877	18.8287
Brazil	Real	0.295779	0.383803	21.0762
Denmark	Kroner	0.134340	0.174319	9.5726
India	Rupee	0.017798	0.023095	1.2682
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.202831	0.263193	14.4530
Mexico	New Peso	0.069068	0.089622	4.9215
New Zealand	Dollar	0.546796	0.709522	38.9627
Norway	Kroner	0.120631	0.156531	8.5957
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012989	0.016855	0.9256
South Africa	Rand	0.125975	0.163465	8.9765
Korea	Won	0.000752	0.000976	0.0536
Sweden	Kroner	0.110106	0.142873	7.8457
Syria	Pound	0.014846	0.019264	1.0579
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024346	0.031591	1.7348
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000402	0.000522	0.0287

Launch of fixed income body set

By Michelle V. Remo

TAGAYTAY CITY—Preparations are underway for the launching next month of the proposed Fixed Income Exchange (FIE).

Similar to the Philippine Stock Exchange which trades securities, the FIE will be an open market where government and private debt securities can be bought and sold.

The establishment of the FIE had long been considered crucial in the development of the country's weak capital market.

In a seminar on the Capital Market Development here, Cesar Crisol of the Philippine Dealing System Holdings, the holding firm of the FIE, said accreditation of brokers for the FIE and preparation of trading guidelines have already been completed.

Crisol said the FIE launch was delayed largely because the government had to settle legal issues involving third-party custodianship.

The FIE will operate under the ownership of Philippine Dealing System Holdings, which is majority-owned by the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

For Amatong, liberating work overseas

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE Secretary Juanita Amatong, who will be leaving the finance portfolio two weeks from now, is already preparing for a new task, this time serving the international community.

Amatong was named a member of the seven-man Policy Advisory Board (PAB) of the Cities Alliance, an organization composed of the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations-Habitat, and various governments including members of the G-7. The organization's mandate is to improve living conditions of the urban poor worldwide.

Amatong will represent Asia in the PAB.

"I am happy and excited about this assignment," said Amatong, who earlier said that leaving the Department of Finance would partly be liberating because of the pressures that went with the job.

The department is spearheading the government effort to solve the country's fiscal problem.

Amatong said that as a member of PAB, she would be responsible for recommending policies that would alleviate urban poverty. She would be tasked to attend the PAB's twice-a-year spring meetings, and to visit Asian countries to observe and reach out to the urban poor.

Cities Alliance hopes to alleviate urban poverty through city development strategies, and citywide and nationwide slum upgrading. City development strategies are plans that will boost economic activity in a city, while slum upgrading is aimed at improving the living conditions of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020—an objective consistent with the Millennium Development Goal.

Aside from the PAB, Amatong is reportedly being offered to work for the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas after her stint at the DOF. Amatong is said to be the strongest contender for the Board.

Amatong, who tendered her resignation last year but was asked to stay on until Feb. 15, would be replaced by Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima. Purisima, in turn, would be replaced by Juan Santos as head of the Department of Trade and Industry.

AMATONG

Ayala unit sets sights on key Asia markets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA International Pte. Ltd., the investment arm of the Ayala Group, is focusing on key markets in Asia like Thailand as it sees positive long-term prospects for its investments there, a company official told the INQUIRER.

AIPL last year joined up with Narai Property, a family-owned company in Thailand, to develop three condominium blocks consisting of 208 units on Ratchadapisek Road in Bangkok, said Charles Cosgrove, AIPL president.

The company invested $2 million for a 40-percent stake in the Thai project.

Cosgrove said more than 50 percent of the units had been pre-sold since last October.

"We are quite optimistic about the long-term prospects in Thailand for the kinds of investments we have in mind," he said. He declined to identify the projects.

AIPL has been taking a prudent stance in investing abroad, choosing to focus more on a few key Asian markets like Thailand and to explore more opportunities in North America.

According to Cosgrove, this investment tack is encouraged by the quality of its business partners abroad and the interest expressed by "a number of regional players" to partner with AIPL.

The firm began investing in the United States in 2003 with nine projects to date. It has sold off one of its interests last year and is looking to sell two to three more this year.

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MACQUARIE

SMC formalizes offer for Aussie dairy firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL Corp., Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, has formally launched its takeover bid for Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd. after submitting offer documents to shareholders of the dairy company last Feb. 1.

Sources familiar with the deal told the INQUIRER that San Miguel has submitted a formal offer to shareholders of National Foods, to buy the company at A$6 a share. The offer period will close on March 18 within which San Miguel can decide to hike its bid price or change the terms of its offer.

Sources added that there was no turning back for San Miguel on its purchase of National. Foods.

San Miguel recently announced its A$1.78 billion ($1.37 billion) bid to acquire National Foods, Australia's largest publicly listed dairy company.

San Miguel's offer, equivalent to A$6 a share of National Foods, topped the A5.45 a share bid of New Zealand dairy giant Fonterra Cooperative Group Limited.

It represented a 28.5 percent premium to the Australian firm's closing price before Fonterra launched its bid in late October.

The offer is subject to regulatory approvals by the Foreign Investment Review Board and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in Australia.

The offer was subject to it winning more than 50 percent of National Foods, which is about 19 percent owned by Fonterra.

To give more teeth to its takeover bid, San Miguel had said it will borrow $1.85 billion from a syndicate of banks. San Miguel had said it "entered into a commitment letter," where lenders have agreed to arrange financing of up to $1.85 billion for the company.

Five banks have so far agreed to lend money to San Miguel, namely ABN Amro Holding NV., Barclays Plc, HSBC Holdings Plc., Standard Chartered Plc. and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

San Miguel is also working on a stock rights offering to raise more funds. The offer will be open to stockholders of record as of Feb.18.

San Miguel earlier said it will issue additional shares equivalent to 10 percent of its outstanding capital stock.

ABN Amro Rothschild was appointed global coordinator, while Sycip Salazar was named legal counsel for the offering.

ABC-5 raising ₱1B in capital

By Clarissa S. Batino

PARDO

THE GROUP of Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco is raising fresh capital for Associated Broadcasting Corp. to enhance its competitiveness.

ABC-5 chair Jose Pardo said Cojuangco's group would raise for the network P1 billion through a combination of borrowings and equity infusion.

Pardo said the shareholders would like to take advantage of the network's momentum, having gained enough following for its home grown programs and international blockbuster shows.

ABC-5 more than tripled its audience share last year, according to Pardo.

He said the company needed the new capital to upgrade its facilities.

The group is looking at adopting a new broadcast technology being used in the United States to upgrade the network's capacity, signal and reception. Pardo said the capital call would be submitted for ABC-5 board approval soon.

"We are very pleased with ABC 5's transformation. We believe we have unlocked the potential of the network. The shareholders would like to sustain this breakthrough by calling for a fresh infusion of about a billion pesos through a combination of debt and equity," said Pardo in an interview.

But insiders said Cojuangco had become impatient in turning around the network and wanted to realize some returns on his investments starting this year.

The businessman, according to sources, wanted to reduce the station's overhead to about P150 million from the annual budget of more than P350 million. ABC-5 spends about a million pesos a day for overhead.

Cojuangco is calling for a review of the original business plan that projected losses in the first two years of operations under the new owners, a break even on the third and fourth year and profit on the fifth year.

Cojuangco led a group of businessmen who acquired ABC from Edward Tan for about P4.5 billion in October 2003.

The consortium that now owns ABC 5 is majority-owned by Cojuangco and 32 percent by DM Archers of banker Raul de Mesa. De Mesa is president of Cojuangco-controlled Bank of Commerce.

He said that being the channel of choice of the country's leading newspaper, The Philippine Daily Inquirer, which produces InqTV, has "brought a dynamic fusion of print and broadcast journalism" within ABC-5.

Urgent memo to senators on VAT

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

WITH deepest respect, I submit this memo on the basics and merits of the VAT system in the hope that it will help you deliberate on the bill raising the tax from 10 to 12 percent.

Modesty aside, I am eminently qualified to write this memo because, like all insurance brokers, I have been in the middle of the system, collecting and paying the tax, since President Ramos made insurance VAT-able in 1992.

To start, in the sale of services, goods or properties, the buyer pays the tax; the seller collects it. This is the output tax. When it is time to remit the output tax to the BIR, the seller deducts the input tax, which is the tax he paid on his own purchases.

Let us say you want to change the side view mirror of your car. One way to do it is to buy the mirror yourself from a spare parts store for, say, P1,000 plus P100 tax, or a total of P1,100. Then you ask an auto repair shop to install it for, say, P200 plus P20 tax, or a total of P220. The entire deal costs you P1,320.

Or, you can ask the auto repair shop to buy the mirror and install it. Under the old sales tax system, the shop would bill you P1,100 for the mirror, and P200 for labor. On the total of P1,300, the shop would slap the 10 percent tax, bringing your total bill to P1,430.

The extra P110 you paid included the sales tax on the sales tax on the mirror. This is double taxation.

The VAT system avoids this double taxation. The shop bills you P1,000 for the mirror, P200 for labor, and slaps the 10 percent VAT on the total of P1,200 (or P120 output tax). Your final bill is P1,320, the same amount when you buy the mirror yourself.

As a result, you pay P110 less under the VAT system than under the old sales tax system.

From the P120 output tax, the shop deducts P100 input tax, which it paid to the spare parts store. The shop's net remittance to BIR is P20. Please note that the P120 VAT that you paid to the shop arrives at the BIR from two sources: P100 from the spare parts store, and P20 from the shop.

Avoiding multiple taxation, thereby reducing the taxpayer's tax, is what the VAT system is all about.

You will wreck the system if you adopt various rates. If the shop charges you 5 percent, the output tax will only be P60, while the input tax remains at P100. The shop loses P40.

There should only be one rate for all. If the shop charges you 5 percent, then the store must also charge 5 percent.

There simply are too many exemptions, not only in the tax code, but also in the implementing rules, in the Board of Investments, and in special laws like the mass housing law.

I am glad to see a move to cut exemptions. But you cannot eliminate all exemptions. Surely, salaries should remain exempted.

And when you remove an exemption, the full VAT rate should be applied. There can be no halfway or partial rate.

How will the rate increase affect the poor? They will be affected in exactly the same proportion as those who are subject to the tax will be affected.

However, in trying to ease the pain of the poor, please be careful that you do not hurt them even more. Some of the exemptions in the tax code are pro-poor.

Already exempted are "the sale or importations of agricultural and marine food products in their original state, livestock and poultry generally used as...foods for human consumption ...fertilizers seeds, seedlings, fingerling." Also exempted are "services by agricultural contract growers and milling for others of palay into rice, corn into grits, and sugar cane into raw sugar."

The introduction of the VAT system is one of the best decisions made by Pres. Aquino. Pres. Ramos expanded the scope. Please be extremely careful what you do with this excellent tax system.

* * *

Mining Footnote. Commenting on my column of last January 17, "On Meddlesome Priests and Gullible Nuns," Reader Gat Inciong wants to know where in the law is it provided that the Filipino people get the lion's share of the after-tax profits of a large-scale mining operation. I refer him to the 1995 Mining Act, the implementing rules, and the Supreme Court decision of last December. Good reading, Mr. Inciong.

Stock market . . .

From page B1

market, even a move by the US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) to hike its rate a quarter-point to 2.5 percent did not come as a surprise to investors.

"Despite the short-term correction, the market remains in a bullish state for the medium to long term. The market will be turning to corporate earnings for guidance. We have an optimistic feeling about the coming earnings season as a good percentage should come in within or above expectations. The stock market goes up when investors believe that corporate earnings will be strong and rising. The economy is growing reasonably well and it is sending all kinds of positive signals. The actions of the mid-cap and third tier stocks shows that they will continue to hug the limelight this week," Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc., said. *Elizabeth Sanchez*

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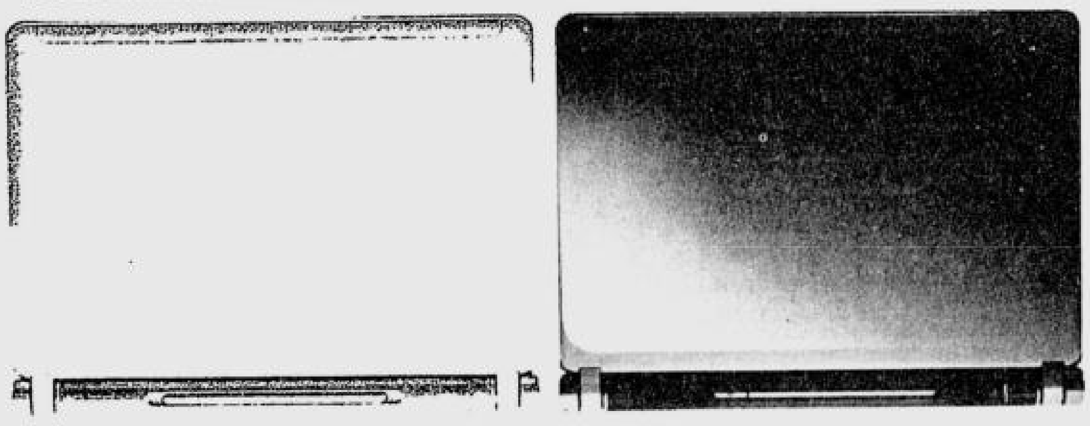

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

CEOs see rise of China, India

LONDON—Chinese and Indian firms are likely to hit the acquisition trail in the coming years, and even the biggest western companies may not be safe, business leaders at the Group of Seven meeting of rich nations said on Friday.

Chinese computer maker Lenovo Group Ltd made the corporate world sit up in December by agreeing to buy IBM's personal computer unit for $1.25 billion, and other groups are also looking hungrily overseas.

"The changes in economic forces will force changes in industry structure," Arun Sarin, chief executive of British mobile phone giant Vodafone, told a business summit at the G7 meeting in London, referring to the growing importance of China and India to the world economy.

The two most populous countries in the world are generating economic growth rates that create not only business openings for for Western firms but also a new breed of fast-growing local companies that may soon challenge the global titans.

"There are some small (Chinese) telecoms companies that manufacture equipment, like Huawei and ZTE. They don't compare with the Ericssons, Motorolas or the Siemens and Lucents of the world," Vodafone's Sarin said.

"In four to five years, I can actually imagine the ZTEs and the Huaweis becoming much larger, and to be candid with you, I won't be surprised if they end up buying some of these companies."

Mervyn Davies, chief executive of Asia-focused bank Standard Chartered, agreed.

"I believe that cross border acquisitions by Chinese and Indian companies are going to grow exponentially," he told the business meeting. "I think we should view that as an opportunity, not as a threat."

"The breadth of companies in India is quite staggering, and I believe that sourcing products and call centers is yesterday's story," Davies said, referring to the rise of potential Indian and Chinese predators. *Reuters*

US payrolls data off target

WASHINGTON—The US economy generated 146,000 jobs in January, the government said Friday, a report that analysts said suggests still-modest economic growth ahead.

The payrolls report, one of the best indicators of economic activity, was well below the average Wall Street forecast of 200,000 new jobs.

Additionally, the Labor Department report revised downward its estimate of December job creation to 133,000 from an earlier estimate of 157,000.

"The report makes the economy look even less like it is 'building a head of steam,'" said Robert Brusca of FAO Economics.

"There isn't really much more to say except that the 'job growth-less' recovery remains fully intact," added David Rosenberg at Merrill Lynch.

The January unemployment rate, based on a separate survey, fell to 5.2 percent from 5.4 percent in December.

But economist Marie-Pierre Ripert at IXIS Corporate and Investment Bank said the lower rate is merely a reflection of more people dropping out of the labor force. The participation rate fell a tenth of a point to 65.8 percent in January.

Steven Stanley at RBS Greenwich Capital said the January payroll figure "was somewhat softer than expected, but much of the shortfall seems to reflect temporary factors," including bad weather that affected construction.

Joel Naroff at Naroff Economic Advisors said the data show an economy that is still muddling through.

Some analysts said the trend appears troublesome.

"The economy is slowing at an alarming pace," said Peter Morici, a business professor at the University of Maryland. "The primary culprit is the growing trade deficit, which is now more than five percent of gross domestic product. This is reflected in the declining fortunes of manufacturing."

The latest report nonetheless showed improvement in the labor market over the past two years.

Since the trough in May 2003, payrolls have grown 2.7 million.

The Labor Department said the total number of employed people hit 132.573 million, as employment broke the February 2001 peak for the first time.

Payrolls have increased by an average of 137,000 in the past three months, a slowdown from the 181,000 average pace in all of 2004.

Avery Shenfeld at CIBC World Markets said the report was a disappointment but not weak enough to push the panic button.

"Tame job growth in January is just another bit of evidence that there is no clear and present danger of an inflationary overheating in the US economy," he said. *AFP*

Dollar hit 3-month high against euro

NEW YORK—The dollar hit a three-month high against the euro Friday after Fed chair Alan Greenspan seemed to backpedal from earlier comments by saying the US current account deficit is not a crisis waiting to happen.

The current account tracks trade and investment flows, and the US is running a deficit of about 6 percent of economic output, its largest share ever.

The dollar, which also got a boost when a leading Chinese official said that Beijing was not ready to abandon its currency peg, was able to shrug off a widely anticipated report on US job creation that was weaker than expected.

The euro fell to $1.2866 from $1.2975 late on Thursday in New York.

The greenback is now up 6 percent from its all-time low of $1.3666 to the euro on December 30.

The dollar however was unable to gain ground against the yen, easing to 104.09 yen from 104.45 on Thursday.

But Greenspan said he believes the US economy can handle the adjustment. And he said market pressures "appear poised to stabilize and over the longer run."

The dollar's initial drop was sparked by a US jobs report which diminished expectations the Fed would accelerate the pace of its monetary tightening.

Official figures from the Labor Department showed the US economy generated 146,000 jobs in January, below market expectations of a 200,000 improvement.

Analysts also said the remarks by Zhou that China is not ready to abandon the peg to the dollar diminished expectations that anything meaningful would emerge at the two-day G7 meeting.

China, which was invited to attend the meeting, has repeatedly pledged over the last several years to loosen its dollar peg, but has not indicated a timetable, saying only that any changes would be gradual and stable. *AFP*

IMF sees 4% growth for S.Korea economy

WASHINGTON—South Korea's economy is expected to grow 4 percent this year on the back of a revival in domestic demand, lower than a projected 4.6 percent in 2004, the IMF said Friday.

The economy has remained in a prolonged slump caused by sluggish domestic consumption.

In an annual review of the South Korean economy, the Washington-based International Monetary Fund said "domestic demand will finally begin to revive in early 2005, supporting yearly growth of 4 percent.

The government had forecast a 5 percent growth in 2005 while the central Bank of Korea predicted 4 percent.

After hitting 7 growth in 2002, the economy weakened to 3.1 the next year and had remained sluggish.

The IMF said experience from other countries that have gone through similar booms and busts suggested that consumption could revive as financial consolidation advanced into its third year.

"Moreover, high capacity utilization ratios and strong manufacturing profitability should ultimately prompt a recovery in facility investment, offsetting a slowdown in construction," the report said.

But the IMF cautioned of both "upside and downside risks."

On the upside, it said, the recovery in domestic demand could be much more vigorous than projected, especially as Korean recoveries have often been swift and sharp.

On the downside, the projected recovery could be undermined if growth in the developed countries falters or there is a significant downturn in the volatile electronics sector, it said.

In addition, with the country highly dependent on imported oil, growth could be cut significantly if oil prices rise rapidly from current levels, the IMF cautioned.

It said that stimulative fiscal and monetary policies were needed to provide a macroeconomic spark to the economy. *AFP*

Time Warner profit rises

NEW YORK—Time Warner Inc., the world's largest media company, on Friday said its quarterly net profit rose by 76 percent, boosted by digital video, high-speed Internet and higher advertising sales at its cable networks.

But its 2005 profit targets of high-single digit percentage growth fell short of the most optimistic estimates,

"We would have liked to see double digits," Peter Mirsky, an analyst at Oppenheimer & Co. said.

The New York-based company, which plans to restate 2000 to 2003 financial results to reflect accounting changes related to a Bertelsmann transaction, said fourth-quarter net profit rose to $1.13 billion, or 24 cents a share, from $639 million, or 14 cents a share, a year earlier.

Excluding a series of one-time benefits, the company posted a profit of 20 cents a share, ahead of analyst estimates of 16 cents, according to Reuters Estimates.

Revenue rose about 2 percent to $11.1 billion from $10.9 billion. Wall Street had expected the company would post revenue of $11.16 billion, according to Reuters Estimates.

Chair and chief executive Richard Parsons, in a conference call with analysts, said the company has completely rebounded from a chaotic past that included government probes of its accounting, a $30 billion debt pile and strategic missteps.

"We are now operating a fully settled down Time Warner," he said.

Wall Street had hoped for a more robust 2005 outlook from Time Warner, now in the midst of a joint bid with Comcast Corp. CMCSA.O to buy Adelphia Communications Corp. *Reuters*

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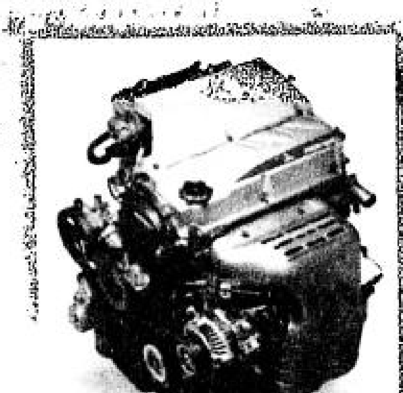

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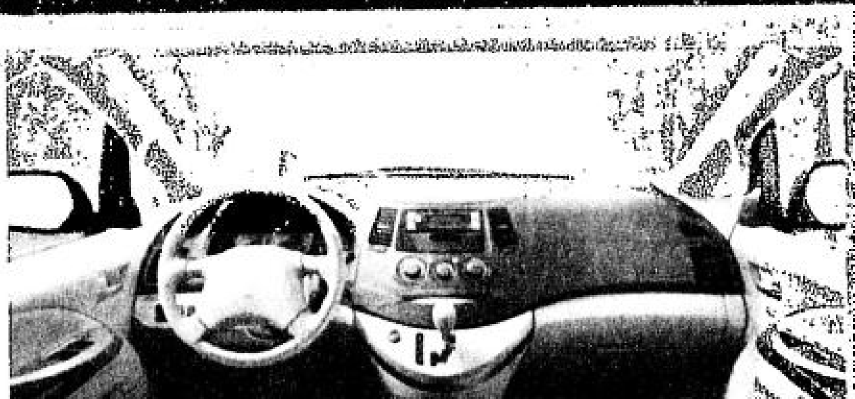

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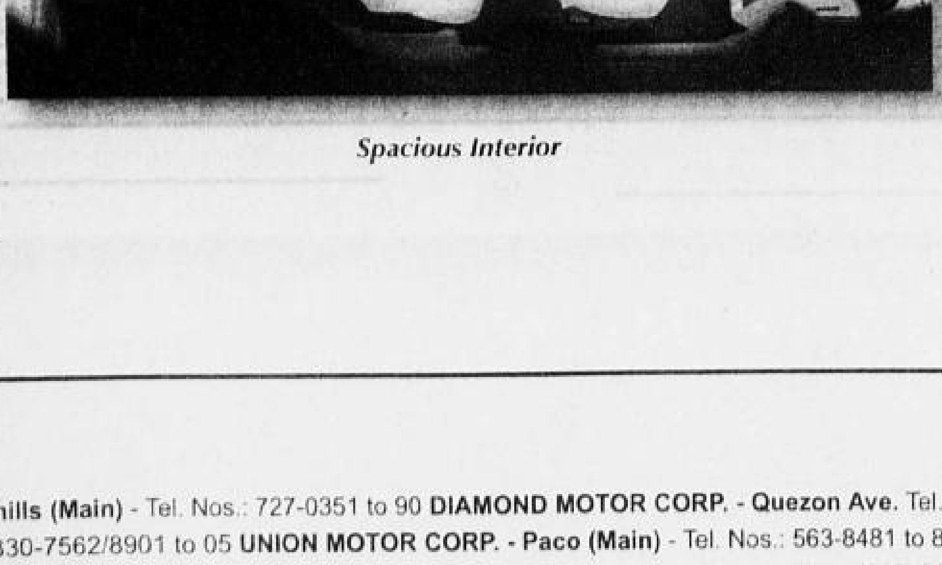

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Dell, Cisco trade data to set pace on Wall Street

NEW YORK—Most US companies have reported earnings and the flow of economic data slows this week, so investors will look to US trade figures and earnings from leading technology stocks Dell and Cisco for fuel to sustain the market's two-week-old rally.

Investors faced a flood of earnings last week, the Iraqi election, commentary and a rate hike from the Federal Reserve as well as economic data on new jobs, January same-store sales and President Bush's State of the Union Address.

For the week, the Dow Jones industrial average ended up 2.8 percent, the Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 2.7 percent and the Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 2.5 percent.

The major indexes are still lower for the year but have clawed back over the past two weeks after starting 2005 with three down weeks in a row.

With most geopolitical issues moving into the background, it is "back to the basics" for US stocks, said Andrew Milligan, head of global strategy at Edinburgh, Scotland-based Standard Life Investments, which manages $180 billion.

A Group of 7 meeting in London on Saturday will be watched for comments on the dollar, although analysts don't expect the meeting to reverse the fortunes of the falling greenback.

On Thursday the government releases US trade data for December, and economists expect the deficit to fall to $57.10 billion from November's record $60.30 billion.

When the November trade figures were released last month, showing the deficit widening unexpectedly, investors were spooked.

"A critical question on the trade deficit would be whether or not a turn has begun to happen," Gordon Fowler, chief investment officer, the Glenmede Trust Co., said.

It is probable the deficit has narrowed because oil prices have stabilized and the weak dollar gives US manufacturers an edge over European counterparts, Fowler said.

But, "if it doesn't improve, I think investors will be patient but uneasy," he said.

Other economic data due this week includes December consumer credit on Monday and the January federal budget on Thursday.

So far, 363 companies in Standard & Poor's 500 index have reported results for the quarter, with 67 percent exceeding Wall Street profit expectations and 20 percent falling short of forecasts, according to data from Reuters Estimates.

Among the larger companies set to report this week are Dell Inc., the world's largest personal computer maker, and Cisco Systems Inc., the world's No. 1 network equipment maker.

Others reporting include technology consultants Electronic Data Systems Corp., Prudential Financial Inc. and insurers Aetna and American International Group Inc..

"It looks like we're going to be up 20 percent, year over year for earnings," Alfred Kugel, chief investment strategist at Stein Roe Investment Counsel, said.

The earnings have really been quite good and better than estimates, thanks in part to the energy companies."

That trend is expected to continue this week, Kugel said.

"We've had good earnings reports and decent economic reports. We've gotten two up weeks, and we should have another one," he said.

Investors will most closely scrutinize the results from Dell and Cisco for hints on the future health of the battered technology sector.

So far this year, technology stocks have fallen nearly 5 percent.

Bear Stearns analyst Andrew Neff, who covers Dell, expects the computer maker to report in-line results with modest upside potential, citing solid demand for personal computers and better component pricing, according to a note for clients.

Pamela Hegarty, investment manager and global tech team leader at Baring Asset Management, said she was "pretty positive" about Dell, a stock owned by the funds she manages.

"My guess is that they would beat earnings estimates by a penny and that they speak positively about the outlook for the next quarter," she said.

On tech earnings in general, she said, "There have been mixed messages through earnings, but I think the overall bias has been positive."

In the previous reporting period in November, an optimistic outlook from Dell helped to boost technology stocks. The day after the computer maker reported earnings, Nasdaq gained more than one percent. *Reuters*

EUROPEAN Union president Jose Manuel Barroso addresses the media at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels. The European Union admitted Wednesday that its listless economic performance had derailed plans to become the world's most dynamic economy by 2010 and set out on a less ambitious pro-business course to create more jobs. AP

World Bank sees slowdown in giant China economy

WASHINGTON—China's economy is showing signs of cooling, but acceleration risks remain and the government should be ready to raise interest rates again if needed, the World Bank said on Friday.

In a quarterly report on China's economy, the World Bank said that despite higher-than-expected 9.5 percent growth last year, there were "clear signs" of a slowdown in domestic demand and investment growth.

The government's monetary policy and administrative measures taken last year to slow the economy were showing results, the bank said. China raised interest rates in October for the first time in nine years.

"The risk of China's economy overheating has declined, as domestic demand growth and consumer price inflation have come down in the wake of measures taken to cool the economy," the report said.

"However, the domestic slowdown was more than compensated by buoyant export growth and moderating import growth."

The World Bank welcomed China's switch from "proactive" to "prudent" macroeconomic policies, which it said showed the government's readiness to raise interest rates if needed.

Still, the lender warned that a renewed pickup in investment growth is "not inconceivable"—for instance if authorities have difficulties in keeping administrative controls effective.

"There are still risks of a return to higher investment levels because of the prevailing low real interest rates and the incentives on local governments to pursue growth," the development lender said.

Also, further increases in foreign exchange flows, from capital flows and the trade surplus, could complicate monetary management, the report cautioned.

"The risks warrant vigilance in maintaining prudent macroeconomic policies," the report said.

Bert Hofman, chief of the economics unit of the World Bank in Beijing, said growth was very high last year due to a slowdown in imports and an acceleration of exports.

For 2005, brisk global economic growth, coupled with robust domestic demand growth, should support another strong year for the Chinese economy, the bank said.

It noted that economic growth became more balanced in 2004 and was "still in the works." *Reuters*

UCPB PROPERTY MARKET
10% DOWNPAYMENT
11% INTEREST
10 YEARS TO PAY

VALENTINE AUCTION
FEBRUARY 26, 2005 • 9:00 A.M.
UCPB BLDG., MAKATI AVE., MAKATI CITY

LAS PIÑAS CITY
UCPB – 1001 COMML LOT L.A. 1,932sqm Brgy. Zapote, Las Piñas City Minimum Bid Price P 12,318,500.00
UCPB – 1002 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 260sqm, F.A. 303.12sqm Polasapos Road Pilar Village Minimum Bid Price P 2,450,500.00
UCPB – 1003 CONDO UNIT F.A. 40.48sqm Coastal Plaza Condo. Minimum Bid Price P 486,000.00
UCPB – 1004 RSDL LOT L.A. 615sqm Masipag St (CAA Ph3) Tunglong Minimum Bid Price P 332,100.00

CALOOCAN CITY
UCPB – 1005 RSDL LOT L.A. 240sqm Coaster St. Bradonville Subd Minimum Bid Price P 387,000.00
UCPB – 1006 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 300sqm, F.A. 174sqm Vista Verde North, Ph. I-F Minimum Bid Price P 1,044,000.00

MANILA CITY
UCPB – 1007 COMML LOT L.A. 632.7sqm No 2244 Taft Avenue, Malate Minimum Bid Price P 25,651,300.00

MAKATI CITY
UCPB – 1008 RSDL LOT W/ IMPRVT L.A. 300sqm Yague St. Maria Dela Paz Village Minimum Bid Price P 5,018,500.00
UCPB – 1009 CONDO UNIT F.A. 129.02sqm Cuano Plaza Condo Corp Minimum Bid Price P 7,394,000.00
UCPB – 1010 COMML LOT L.A. 478sqm Kalayaan St. Sta. Cruz Makati Minimum Bid Price P 10,755,000.00
UCPB – 1011 RSDL LOT W/ OLD HOUSE L.A. 740sqm 10 Paseo De Roxas Ext. Bel-Air Minimum Bid Price P 23,500,500.00
UCPB – 1012 RSDL LOT L.A. 210.8sqm 291 Makati Prime City St. Paul St. Minimum Bid Price P 5,100,000.00
UCPB – 1146 COMML LOT L.A. 317sqm 1765-1767 Garcia St. Repeso Minimum Bid Price P 30,872,000.00

MANDALUYONG
UCPB – 1015 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 312sqm w/ 2 STOREY No 274 Sta. Lucia St. Plainview Minimum Bid Price P 4,035,000.00
UCPB – 1016 PENTHOUSE F.A. 125sqm Sierra Madre St. Ark Condo Minimum Bid Price P 2,548,710.00
UCPB – 1017 CONDO UNIT F.A. 140.0sqm Court [illegible] Wack-wack Rd. Minimum Bid Price P 4,350,000.00

MARIKINA
UCPB – 1018 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 529sqm Twin River I, Bo. Nangka Minimum Bid Price P 5,200,000.00

PASAY CITY
UCPB – 1019 PENTHOUSE F.A. 790sqm Unit 1502 15th Floor Marbella I Minimum Bid Price P 4,904,000.00

PARAÑAQUE CITY
UCPB – 1020 CONDO UNIT F.A. 171.2sqm w/ PARKING 909 9th flr Chateau de Baie Condo Minimum Bid Price P 3,931,250.00
UCPB – 1021 CONDO UNIT F.A. 144.7sqm w/ PARKING 907 9th flr Chateau de Baie Condo Minimum Bid Price P 3,421,250.00

UCPB – 1022 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 417sqm F.A. 577.50sqm Bethsaida St. Multinational Village Minimum Bid Price P 6,885,000.00
UCPB – 1023 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 563sqm Jose Abad Santos Bayview Village Minimum Bid Price P 6,774,500.00
UCPB – 1024 RSDL LOT L.A. 95sqm w/ IMPRVT L. Gabriel Street Minimum Bid Price P 1,576,000.00

PASIG CITY
UCPB – 1025 RSDL LOT L.A. 224sqm Bagong Anya St., Rosario 4 Subd Minimum Bid Price P 760,000.00
UCPB – 1025 A CONDO UNIT F.A. 224.14sqm Park Chateau, Garnet & Sapphire Minimum Bid Price P 5,355,000.00

QUEZON CITY
UCPB – 1147 TOWN HOUSE L.A. 341.2sqm 10th St. New Manila Minimum Bid Price P 10,101,000.00
UCPB – 1148 TOWN HOUSE L.A. 343.1sqm 10th St. New Manila Minimum Bid Price P 11,100,000.00
UCPB – 1026 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 586sqm #44 Zaragosa St. Araneta Village Minimum Bid Price P 6,961,500.00
UCPB – 1027 RSDL LOT L.A. 181.5sqm Agus St. New Haven Subd Minimum Bid Price P 935,000.00
UCPB – 1028 RSDL W/ IMPRVT L.A. 96sqm #17-A Cumming St. NIA Subd Minimum Bid Price P 780,250.00
UCPB – 1029 RSLD BLDG L.A. 102sqm 304 P. Rivera St. Brgy. Sangandaan Minimum Bid Price P 1,692,000.00
UCPB – 1030 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 281sqm Bighani cor Flores de Mayo St. Minimum Bid Price P 2,762,500.00
UCPB – 1031 CONDO UNIT F.A. 120.17sqm w/ PARKING 707 Jade Place Condo Visayas Ave Minimum Bid Price P 2,653,000.00
UCPB – 1032 TOWN HOUSE L.A. 54sqm 18 [illegible] St. Dionisia Royale Ext. Minimum Bid Price P 1,360,000.00
UCPB – 1033 CONDO UNIT F.A. 87.90sqm Adelina 2 Condominium Columbia Minimum Bid Price P 1,377,000.00
UCPB – 1034 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 103sqm Goodwill Home Ph 2 Bagbag Nov Minimum Bid Price P 2,370,000.00
UCPB – 1035 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 149sqm Noemi St. Goodwill Homes Ph 1 Minimum Bid Price P 1,656,000.00
UCPB – 1036 2 DOOR APARTMNT L.A. 155sqm Metrogreen Village Bagbag Nov Minimum Bid Price P 3,122,344.00
UCPB – 1037 CONDO UNIT F.A. 53sqm 209 2nd fl. Prince Jun Condo Minimum Bid Price P 1,269,000.00
UCPB – 1038 RSDL LOT L.A. 3,135sqm G. Meadows Ave. Green Meadow Minimum Bid Price P 45,863,000.00
UCPB – 1039 RSDL LOT L.A. 561sqm Cynthia St. Doña Carmen Subd Minimum Bid Price P 1,730,000.00
UCPB – 1040 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 400sqm Maamo St. Sikatuna Vill. Diliman Minimum Bid Price P 4,800,000.00

UCPB – 1041 TOWN HOUSE F.A. 66sqm Trafalgar Manor, Esteban Abada St., Minimum Bid Price P 3,025,000.00

GREENHILLS SAN JUAN
UCPB – 1042 OFFICE CONDO F.A. 279sqm Goldhill Tower, Annapolis St. Minimum Bid Price P 11,808,000.00
UCPB – 1045 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 926sqm Madison & Polk St. North Greenhills Minimum Bid Price P 30,329,000.00
UCPB – 1046 CONDO UNIT F.A. 180sqm One Beverly Place Condo Annapolis Minimum Bid Price P 6,400,000.00

VALENZUELA CITY
UCPB – 1047 RSDL LOT L.A. 264sqm w/ IMPRVT 700 Mango Grove Subd. Coloong 2 Minimum Bid Price P 272,000.00
UCPB – 1048 RSDL LOT L.A. 183sqm w/ IMPRVT 14 Little Tagaytay St. Polo Minimum Bid Price P 654,500.00

ANTIPOLO
UCPB – 1049 RSDL LOT L.A. 834sqm Salford St. Town & Country Estates Minimum Bid Price P 2,694,500.00
UCPB – 1050 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 165sqm F.A. 164sqm Cuesta Verde Exec. Village Minimum Bid Price P 1,062,000.00
UCPB – 1053 RSDL LOT L.A. 1,151sqm Town & Country Estates Minimum Bid Price P 3,717,900.00
UCPB – 1054 A RSDL LOT L.A. 392sqm Cherry St. Town & Country Estates Minimum Bid Price P 1,058,400.00
UCPB – 1061 RSDL LOT L.A. 1,004sqm Brgy. Rd. Brgy. May-iba Teresa Minimum Bid Price P 1,470,500.00

CAINTA/ TAYTAY/ ANGONO
UCPB – 1062 RSDL LOT L.A. 307sqm w/ IMPRVT Noel Subd. Brgy. Dolores Taytay Minimum Bid Price P 790,410.00
UCPB – 1063 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 240sqm F.A. 208sqm Williamsburg St. Richmond Subd Minimum Bid Price P 1,701,000.00
UCPB – 1064 RSDL LOT L.A. 400sqm Village East III Darangan Minimum Bid Price P 734,800.00
UCPB – 1065 RSDL LOT L.A. 1,054sqm #151 Ilang-Ilang St. Nieves Hills Minimum Bid Price P 1,944,000.00
UCPB – 1066 RSDL LOT L.A. 236,226sqm [illegible] Rd. Bo. Gulnang Bayan Minimum Bid Price P 10,359,000.00
UCPB – 1067 RSDL LOT L.A. 4,745sqm w/ IMPRVMNT [illegible] St. Vista Verde Exec. Minimum Bid Price P 9,965,000.00

BULACAN
UCPB – 1068 RSDL LOT L.A. 181sqm Opal St. Villacor Vill. Meycauayan Minimum Bid Price P 2,720,000.00
UCPB – 1069 RSDL LOT L.A. 221sqm 3rd St. Bo. Fatima Sapang Palay Minimum Bid Price P 340,000.00
UCPB – 1071 RSDL LOT L.A. 200sqm [illegible] St. Subd Tura Bocaue Minimum Bid Price P 453,200.00
UCPB – 1072 W/ 3 FACTORY L.A. 22,311.40sqm F.A. VARIOUS [illegible] Line Bo. [illegible] Minimum Bid Price P 34,656,000.00

UCPB – 1149 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 20sqm Avocado St. Area F Sapang Palay Minimum Bid Price P 500,000.00

CAVITE CITY
UCPB – 1073 CONDOTEL F.A. 182.68sqm Southwoods Villa, Carmona Minimum Bid Price P 4,507,992.00
UCPB – 1074 RESORT BLDG L.A. 1,236sqm w/ POOL Villa Ramirez Subd Tabon Kawit Minimum Bid Price P 3,771,000.00
UCPB – 1077 COMML LOT L.A. 4,900sqm Macaria Business Cent. Poblacion Minimum Bid Price P 30,242,350.00
UCPB – 1077 A COMML LOT L.A. 3,324sqm Macaria Business Cent. Poblacion Minimum Bid Price P 26,428,000.00
UCPB – 1078 CONDOTEL/RESORT F.A. 71sqm Vista De Loro Heights Puerto Azul Minimum Bid Price P 1,589,500.00
UCPB – 1079 RSDL LOT L.A. 615sqm M. Southwoods, Cabilang Baybay Minimum Bid Price P 1,627,500.00
UCPB – 1080 INDSTL LOT L.A. 7,079sqm Bo. Niog II Bacoor Minimum Bid Price P 5,926,500.00
UCPB – 1081 RESORT HOUSE L.A. 240sqm Punta Del Rio Resort & Country Minimum Bid Price P 7,140,000.00

BIÑAN/ SAN PADRO & STA ROSA
UCPB – 1086 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 1,211sqm (2-storey) Bo. Pooc, Sta. Rosa Minimum Bid Price P 2,903,701.00
UCPB – 1087 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 370sqm, F.A. 164sqm [illegible] St. United San Pedro Minimum Bid Price P 2,430,000.00

TAGAYTAY CITY
UCPB – 1088 CONDO UNIT F.A. 100.25sqm #128 Leighton Garden Condo Minimum Bid Price P 3,042,000.00
UCPB – 1089 VACANT LOT L.A. 11,572sqm Bo. Maharlika East Tagaytay Minimum Bid Price P 17,850,000.00

LAGUNA
UCPB – 1150 RSDL LOT L.A. 480sqm Caliraya Lake Resort Subd. Ph II Minimum Bid Price P 225,000.00
UCPB – 1090 RSDL LOT L.A. 200sqm L6 Marymount Village Phase 3 Minimum Bid Price P 1,834,200.00
UCPB – 1091 COMML LOT L.A. 1,440sqm W/ IMPRVT Grand Riviera Subd. Bukal Sur Minimum Bid Price P 13,275,000.00
UCPB – 1092 RSDL LOT L.A. 300sqm Diversion Rd. Bukal Sur Pila Minimum Bid Price P 8,640,000.00
UCPB – 1093 RSDL LOT L.A. 300sqm Magnolia St. Villa Adelina III Minimum Bid Price P 580,500.00
UCPB – 1094 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 1,982sqm Consuelo St. Mauro Subd., San Lucas Minimum Bid Price P 3,802,500.00
UCPB – 1095 COMML LOT L.A. 1,548sqm Nat'l Hi-way Banca-banca Victoria Minimum Bid Price P 2,925,000.00

UCPB – 1097 RSDL LOT L.A. 271sqm Along Redwood Park, Calamba Minimum Bid Price P 414,630.00
UCPB – 1099 RESORT BLDG L.A. 300sqm Maria Makiling Villa, Pansol, Calamba Minimum Bid Price P 3,600,000.00
UCPB – 1100 RSDL LOT L.A. 121sqm Magnolia St. Villa Adelina III, Bulilan Minimum Bid Price P 467,500.00
UCPB – 1101 RSDL LOT L.A. 305sqm Palacio Real Subd. Calamba Minimum Bid Price P 890,975.00

BATANGAS CITY
UCPB – 1105 POULTRY & PIGGERY L.A. 37,117sqm w/ HOUSE National Road Bo. Tangob Minimum Bid Price P 3,652,200.00
UCPB – 1108 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 2,935sqm Led-led Road Purok 6 Lipa City Minimum Bid Price P 4,000,500.00
UCPB – 1109 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 880sqm Bo. Rd. Tiambo, Tayaan Minimum Bid Price P 2,010,000.00
UCPB – 1110 COMML LOT L.A. 1,034sqm Katipunan St. Lipa City Minimum Bid Price P 27,060,000.00
UCPB – 1111 RSDL LOT L.A. 1,043sqm w/ IMPRVMNT Brgy. Banay-banay, Lipa City Minimum Bid Price P 7,570,000.00
UCPB – 1112 COMML LOT L.A. 322sqm Katipunan St. Lipa City Minimum Bid Price P 4,150,000.00
UCPB – 1113 COMML LOT L.A. 755sqm W/ IMPRVT Gen. Luna St. Cor. Atienza Rd. Minimum Bid Price P 7,135,200.00
UCPB – 1114 COMML LOT L.A. 11,632sqm W/ IMPRVT Nat'l Rd., Brgy. Bugtong na Pulo Minimum Bid Price P 25,399,000.00
UCPB – 1115 RESORT L.A. 39,080sqm Within Brgy. Balanga, Lemery Minimum Bid Price P 17,025,000.00
UCPB – 1116 COMML LOT L.A. 1,363sqm [illegible] Ave. Cor. A. Bonifacio St. Minimum Bid Price P 30,800,000.00
UCPB – 1151 RSDL LOT L.A. 5,501sqm w/ IMPRVNT Sakura Exec. Village Bo. Marauoy Minimum Bid Price P 30,600,000.00

QUEZON
UCPB – 1119 INDSL LOT L.A. 8,477sqm Bo. [illegible] Mun. of Tayabas Minimum Bid Price P 11,385,000.00
UCPB – 1120 3 DOOR APRT L.A. 326sqm Villa San Lorenzo Subd. Phase 2 Iba Minimum Bid Price P 594,000.00
UCPB – 1121 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 75sqm w/ WARE HOUSE Enriquez St. Poblacion Lucena Minimum Bid Price P 1,705,500.00
UCPB – 1123 INDSL LOT L.A. 1,188sqm W/ IMPRVT Purok Matahimik Cotta Lucena Minimum Bid Price P 3,322,594.00
UCPB – 1124 COMML LOT L.A. 1,508sqm Nat'l Road Bo. Iyam Lucena Minimum Bid Price P 5,205,000.00
UCPB – 1125 RSDL LOT L.A. 250sqm San Isidro Subd. Bo. Gulang-gulang Minimum Bid Price P 588,491.00
UCPB – 1126 COMML BLDG INDSTRIAL w/ IMPROVEMENT L.A. 400sqm F.A. 519.15sqm Purok Matahimik Cotta Minimum Bid Price P 2,025,000.00

UCPB – 1127 RSDL LOT L.A. 2,533sqm CPG Ave. East St. Tagbilaran Minimum Bid Price P 1,480,000.00
UCPB – 1128 RSDL LOT L.A. 2,273sqm Teodoro Bantol St. Tagbilaran Minimum Bid Price P 1,727,000.00
UCPB – 1151 RSDL LOT L.A. 481sqm Lucena Diversion Port Rd. Dumacaa Minimum Bid Price P 2,317,500.00
UCPB – 1152 COMML LOT L.A. 5,074sqm Quezon Ave. Brgy. 6, Minimum Bid Price P 20,487,000.00
UCPB – 1153 COMML LOT L.A. 3,796sqm Purok Cotta Lucena Minimum Bid Price P 5,569,200.00
UCPB – 1154 COMML LOT L.A. 170sqm Leon Guinto Poblacion Minimum Bid Price P 4,181,400.00
UCPB – 1155 RSDL LOT L.A. 180sqm [illegible] St. Betterliving Subd Isabang Minimum Bid Price P 1,440,000.00
UCPB – 1156 AGRI-LOT L.A. 36,409sqm Provincial Rd Bo. Puro San Antonio Minimum Bid Price P 4,914,000.00

BATAAN CITY
UCPB 1129 – HOUSE & LOT L.A. 300sqm, F.A. 89sqm Halcon St. Mt View Subd. Mariveles Minimum Bid Price P 1,476,000.00
UCPB – 1158 VACANT LOT L.A. 201sqm AB Fernandez Ave. East Poblacion Minimum Bid Price P 4,500,000.00

NUEVA ECIJA
UCPB – 1130 AGRO-INDSL L.A. 1,436sqm Brgy. San Pascual Talavera Minimum Bid Price P 324,000.00
UCPB – 1159 AGRI LOT L.A. 58,109sqm [illegible] Gapan Minimum Bid P 750,000.00

TARLAC CITY
UCPB 1131 – INDSL LOT L.A. 4,307sqm (w/ poultry house) Bo. San Agustin Concepcion Minimum Bid Price P 6,217,200.00
UCPB 1132 – AGRO-INDSL LOT L.A. 111,656sqm Bo. Sapang Maragul Minimum Bid Price P 5,582,800.00
UCPB – 1160 RSDL LOT L.A. 3,379sqm Bo. San Isidro Tarlac Minimum Bid Price P 2,160,000.00
UCPB – 1161 AGRI-LOT L.A. 43,608sqm Brgy. [illegible] Mun of Sta. Ignacia Minimum Bid Price P 2,010,000.00

PAMPANGA CITY
UCPB 1133 – INDUSTRIAL LOT L.A. 50,580sqm Bo. [illegible] Mabalacat Minimum Bid Price P 7,215,097.00
UCPB – 1162 AGRO-INDTRL LOT L.A. 72,152sqm Brgy. Sulipan Apalit, Pampanga Minimum Bid Price P 10,674,000.00

ISABELA CITY
UCPB 1134 – COMML BLDG L.A. 168sqm, F.A. 576sqm Brgy. Villasis, Santiago City Minimum Bid Price P 6,158,000.00
UCPB 1135 – RSDL BLDG L.A. 374sqm F.A. 233.5sqm Rizal Street Centro Roxas Minimum Bid Price P 2,592,000.00

UCPB 1136 – RSDL LOT L.A. 937sqm Pro Rd Bo. Ipil Echague, Isabela Minimum Bid Price P 630,000.00
UCPB 1137 – PIGGERY L.A. 32,357sqm (Various) Bo. Road Bo. Del Pilar Alicia Minimum Bid Price P 20,470,500.00
UCPB 1138 – INDUSTRIAL LOT L.A. 12,320sqm F.A. 3,181.80sqm Capirpirwan Cordon Isabela Minimum Bid Price P 3,600,000.00
UCPB – 1163 RSDL LOT L.A. 501sqm Babista Village, Calao East Santiago City Minimum Bid Price P 511,200.00

ALBAY
UCPB 1139 – RSDL LOT L.A. 181sqm W/ IMPRVT Velasco Subd. Daraga Minimum Bid Price P 735,300.00
UCPB – 1164 RSDL LOT L.A. 200sqm Bo. Tahao Old Albay Legaspi City Minimum Bid Price P 600,000.00
UCPB – 1165 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 725sqm F.A. 531sqm [illegible] Subdivision Legaspi Minimum Bid Price P 14,614,200.00
UCPB – 1166 COMML LOT L.A. 658sqm Brgy. Arimbay Legaspi Minimum Bid Price P 1,544,400.00
UCPB – 1167 COMML BLDG L.A. 421sqm (2 STOREY) Penaranda St. Legaspi Minimum Bid Price P 8,031,500.00
UCPB – 1168 RSDL LOT L.A. 204sqm La Playa Village Bowol, Legaspi City Minimum Bid Price P 749,700.00
UCPB – 1169 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 558sqm F.A. 426sqm Sevel Village (Subd) Daraga Minimum Bid Price P 3,191,400.00
UCPB – 1170 RSDL LOT L.A. 2,400sqm Magayon Drive Daraga Minimum Bid Price P 3,534,840.00
UCPB – 1171 HOUSE & LOT L.A. 415sqm F.A. 318 [illegible] Legaspi Minimum Bid Price P 1,710,000.00
UCPB – 1172 RSDL LOT L.A. 622sqm Villahermosa Nat'l Hi-way Daraga Minimum Bid Price P 224,100.00

SORSOGON
UCPB 1140 – RSDL LOT L.A. 200sqm 510 Magsaysay Bvd. Bo. [illegible] Minimum Bid Price P 700,000.00

CAMARINES NORTE
UCPB – 1141 RSDL LOT L.A. 647sqm Santol St. Liboton Naga City Minimum Bid Price P 900,000.00
UCPB 1142 RSDL LOT L.A. 4,455sqm Isarog Ave. Brgy. Tinago Naga City Minimum Bid Price P 8,450,000.00
UCPB 1143 – RSDL LOT L.A. 2,633sqm w/ IMPRVMT [illegible] Subd. Bo. Tambo Pamplona Minimum Bid Price P 5,810,000.00

BENGUET
UCPB 1144 – COMML LOT L.A. 250sqm w/ IMPRVT Palma St. Palma Urbano Baguio Minimum Bid Price P 3,510,000.00
UCPB 1145 – Subdivision Lots L.A. 20,754sqm (84 Titles) Vista Verde Hts. Subd. [illegible] Minimum Bid Price P 10,260,000.00

San Antonio Village Makati City
PALM TOWER
Commercial Units
21.00sqm P 571,200.00
34.29sqm P 894,797.55
103.48sqm P 2,568,373.60

San Antonio Village Makati City
PALM TOWER
Residential Units
36.36sqm P 1,137,340.80
65.00sqm P 2,033,200.00
107.05sqm P 2,865,996.00

Annapolis Greenhills San Juan
ATLANTA CENTER
Office Units
76.57sqm P 2,439,520.20
95.83sqm P 3,053,143.80
159.06sqm P 5,711,844.60

Biñan, Laguna
SOUTHVILLE VILLAGE
Residential Lots
130sqm P 228,150.00
207sqm P 306,697.50
300sqm P 522,750.00

Lipa, Batangas
MT. MALARAYAT GOLF
Fairway Lots
966sqm P 3,061,669.50
1,526sqm P 4,838,551.01
2,258sqm P 7,156,574.16

Dasmariñas, Cavite
TOWN & COUNTRY
Residential Lots
180sqm P 504,000.00
200sqm P 560,000.00
308sqm P 862,400.00

Antipolo City
COTTONWOODS HEIGHTS
Residential Lots
200sqm P 646,000.00
345sqm P 1,114,350.00
459sqm P 1,482,570.00

Lipa, Batangas
GOLDEN SUBDIVISION
Residential Lots
(17 lots) 1,483sqm P 1,870,031.00
(28 lots) 2,361sqm P 2,977,171.00
(51 lots) 3,267sqm P 4,119,618.00

Cavite City
SOUTHWOODS CARMONA
Residential Lots
470sqm P 1,997,500.00
506sqm P 2,392,750.00
609sqm P 2,588,250.00

Antipolo City
HILLS OF MAIA ALTA
Residential Lots
170sqm P 505,750.00
228sqm P 678,300.00
326sqm P 929,850.00

Lipa, Batangas
PALMRIDGE POINT
Residential Lots
335sqm P 2,494,384.38
444sqm P 3,305,990.05
500sqm P 3,722,961.76

Antipolo City
FOLIAGE HILLS
Residential Lots
177sqm P 571,710.00
184sqm P 594,320.00
216sqm P 697,680.00

SHOW MONEY: Php 25,000 CASH/MC PER PROPERTY • ALL PROPERTIES FOR SALE ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" • PROPERTIES AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGES WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

AUCTION MANAGER
THE PROPERTY FORUM
TELEPHONE NOS.: (02)534-9536 or (02)534-6954 (MON - SUN, 8:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.)
CALL CENTER: (02)633-1988 to 90 (MON - SUN, 10:30 A.M. - 8:30 P.M.)
CELLPHONE NO.: (0927)550-6401

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Editor Leo Magno
Text us your feedback: inquirer it name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Manhunt on for Filipino hacker

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

A MANHUNT for the alleged Filipino hacker of the government portal "gov.ph" and other government websites has been launched after the suspect went into hiding.

Judge Antonio Eugenio of the Manila Regional Trial Court ordered the arrest of JJ Maria Giner on Jan. 24, 2005 for violating section 33a of the Electronic Commerce Law. However, Giner remains at large to date.

"He's now on top of our priority list," said Police Superintendent Gilbert Sosa of the Anti-Transnational Crime Division (ATCD) of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG), in an interview. Sosa is also executive director of the Government Computer Security Incident Response Team (G-SIRT).

According to the arrest warrant, the court set bail for Giner at P25,000 ($440).

The Department of Justice decided last month that there was enough evidence to file charges against Giner. A copy of the DoJ's resolution, obtained by Infotech, revealed that Giner had admitted to hacking the government websites but indicated that he had no intention to "corrupt, alter, steal or destroy" files contained in the computer systems that were compromised.

The DoJ resolution indicated that Giner penetrated government websites of the National Economic and Development Authority, the National Book Development Board, the Philippine Navy as well as the web servers or computer systems hosting websites of the local Internet service provider Bitstop and UP Visayas Miagao in Iloilo.

Giner also launched attacks against the websites of the Office of the Presidential Management Staff in Malacañang, the Task Force on Security of Critical Infrastructure, the Professional Regulatory Board, the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, according to the DoJ resolution.

"It was discovered that the respondent attempted to penetrate the digital infrastructure of government agencies as well as private businesses. Several network infrastructure setups were first scanned by [Giner] for vulnerability exploits. Critical government infrastructure facilities were also probed. Allegedly, [Giner] listed all the possible attack scenarios and backdoor programs to penetrate the target systems," the resolution added.

In his counter-affidavit, Giner admitted to sending an e-mail to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), informing the agency about the vulnerability of its website to hackers. With this admission, he argued that if he had the intention of destroying or corrupting the system, he would not have informed the agency.

The suspected hacker also denied launching a so-called "denial-of-service" attack on the Journal Group of Publications website that resulted in system overload of the computer system hosting it, his counter-affidavit said.

GINER

The DoJ resolution however said that Giner had clearly violated section 33a of the E-commerce Law (RA8792) because he was not authorized to access government websites.

"Intention is not essential in this mode as mere unauthorized access is a violation of the law," the resolution said.

The DoJ resolution further revealed that Giner launched attacks from April 27, 2004 until May 7, 2004, three days before last year's national elections.

The resolution said that digital evidence gathered by the PNP's ATCD-CIDG Computer Crime unit indicated that Giner launched his attack from Internet addresses issued by Asia Pacific Network Information Center to Globe Telecom.

When police further traced the IP addresses, they led to the UP Miagao campus in Iloilo, registered under the name of Efren Servento.

Police then found that the IP addresses were assigned to a Linux-based system that served as a "primary gateway" to almost 200 computers all over the UP Miagao network.

Further probing this network led police computer investigators to the Information and Publications Office, and eventually to a computer used by alleged hacker Giner, who happened to be the webmaster and program developer of UP Miagao.

Giner's computer hard drive was seized and gave police "vital information" indicating what had transpired before and during the alleged network intrusion of the "gov.ph" portal and the Journal Group of Publications website, recounted the DoJ resolution.

A source privy to the case disclosed that the police almost lost Giner after some Globe employees allegedly informed UP Miagao of the ensuing police investigation.

The same source added that Globe initially refused to cooperate with the police until it was issued a court subpoena.

The DoJ resolution further revealed that Giner is a contractual employee of UP Miagao but had access to the university's computer systems as webmaster.

The resolution indicated that he comes from a middle-class family; his father is a retired PC soldier and his mother is a teacher.

An outstanding student during his primary years, Giner was accelerated from Grade III to Grade IV. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Fisheries at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas and had never been charged with any criminal offense.

According to a copy of his dossier obtained by Infotech, he has worked for Process Foundation-Panay Inc. and the UP Visayas' Philippine Marine Transport Systems Project as research assistant.

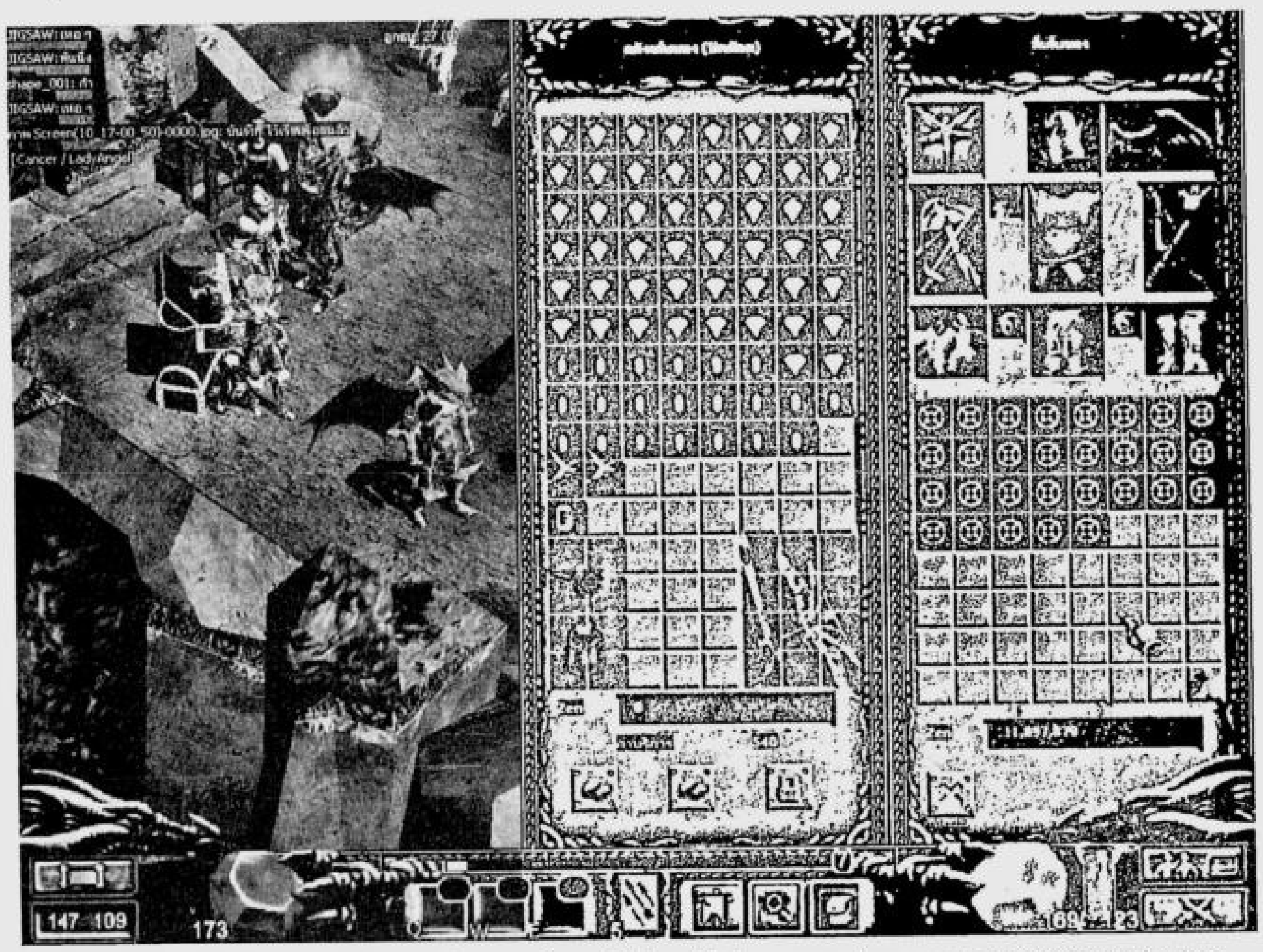
He also had evident skills in web development, database construction, model construction, and web interface development (HTML and JavaScript Programming), basic visual programming, MS Office applications, computer graphics design, and CRM Work.

His other skills include First Aid and basic life support systems and scuba diving. His interests include fishes, gardening, cooking, computers, bio-toxins and poisons, arts (visual and music), underwater, coral reefs, islands. He speaks Hiligaynon, Kiniray-a, Filipino, English and Cebuano.

According to the DoJ resolution, Undersecretary Abraham Puruganan, head of the Task Force for the Security of Critical Infrastructure (TFSCI), is the main complainant in the "gov.ph" hacking case.

On May 3, 2004, he filed a case against Giner in behalf of several government websites attacked from April to May 2004. Other complainants include the Office of the President, the Department of Interior and Local Government, and PNP CIDG-ATCD.

Puruganan said the TFSCI has instructed the police to ask the Bureau of Immigration to issue a hold-departure order in case Giner decides to escape abroad.



AFTER RAGNAROK, Mu Online is now the second massively multiplayer game to go commercial in the Philippines.

MU Online goes live

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

ONLINE game MU Online has gone live and commercial, according to its local publisher.

MU Online is the second massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) to go commercial in the Philippines following Level-Up!'s Ragnarok.

Following months of open trial, MU Online will start selling prepaid cards in different denominations to local gamers, according to local game publisher Mobius.ph.

MU Online prepaid cards are available in P20, P50, P100 and P350 denominations. A P100 card will entitle local gamers to unlimited game play for one week, while the P350 cards will provide unlimited game time for one month, Mobius.ph added.

"This is in response to recommendations from our loyal player base since we believe that players are what make an online game work. With unlimited game time, MU gamers can stay logged on to MU without worrying about their credit balance. This will help foster the community aspect of the game as our players can spend more time conversing with each other instead of just leveling up all the time," said Carlo Rufino, Mobius.ph director for game management.

Rufino claimed that MU gamers have responded well to the transition from free open beta trial to their pay-to-play service.

He said card sales have been brisk during the first week of commercial launch.

"We sold millions of prepaid cards. We believe this is because the gaming community sees great entertainment value in our products and services. And gamers will actually have a lot more to look forward to from Mobius.ph this year—unique content and fun in-game events every month as well as offline meets and tournaments," the executive said.

Mobius.ph is planning to introduce electronic and mobile payment channels for MU Online to supplement prepaid card distribution. Prepaid cards are currently available at Internet cafés and PC Express outlets.

Currently, a credit card payment system is in place.

Gamers can purchase MU game credits online by logging on to www.mobius.ph, navigating to the "my account" page, and selecting the credit card payment option.

The commercial version of the game now features the latest international version of MU Online, called version 99z.

The version 99z introduces a powerful character called "MU Dark Lord," Rufino said.

The new version of the online game also introduces new maps populated with tougher monsters, and more quest-based events.

Tournaments will also be held soon for local gamers, the local publisher said.

CICT initiates re-delegation of '.ph' domain

By Erwin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

THE COMMISSION on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) has initiated procedures of redelegation of the ".ph" domain.

The CICT announced Friday the creation of a technical working group (TWG) to oversee the redelegation procedures. CICT Commissioner Damian Domingo Mapa, who is responsible for the agency's business development strategies, will head the TWG.

"The first task of the TWG is to initiate procedures for redelegation of the '.ph' domain name pursuant to Section 7, Article XII of the guidelines (of the administration of the '.ph')," a separate statement by the CICT indicated.

Joel Disini is the current administrator of country code top-level domain (ccTLD), and also owner of dotPH Inc.

Based on the CICT guideline, Disini has to decide whether he wants to continue as administrator of the Internet domain's registry or choose to be a registrar instead.

Disini was given until Jan. 15, 2005 to decide. He has not made a decision to date.

"We regret that Secretary Peña has chosen this path. But we are encouraged by the fact that ICANN is an impartial body with a great level of experience in domain issues," he said in an e-mailed statement.

In an earlier interview, Disini expressed disappointment over the government agency's move.

"By bringing the matter up with ICANN, Secretary Peña will now have to answer the questions he has been evading for the last 18 months: If the government has control of the domain registry, how will that improve things? What problems does he hope to solve? How will he go about fixing these problems? Can he fix these problems better than we can?"

Disini added that redelegation would not improve the administration of the ".ph" domain.

"In fact it would only make matters worse. You only need to look at how badly the government manages its own servers to get an idea of what would happen if Mr. Peña had his way. Despite this, I believe DotPH is one of the best ccTLDs on the planet, and I challenge Secretary Peña to show ICANN otherwise, or that he has thought this matter through carefully and that he has considered options less severe than redelegation."

Peña, for his part, stressed that its recent move was meant to send a stronger message to Disini.

"If we still can't come up with an agreement, our ultimate direction is redelegation," the official said. "ICANN has still to be the one to redelegate in the end but it prefers that it be settled here before we elevate this matter to them."

Peña said however that the CICT was not closing its doors to Disini. The technical working group is willing to sit down with him to address concerns previously raised on the government guidelines.

Peña said the decision to start the redelegation procedure is consistent with government guidelines in the administration of the ".ph" domain.

A statement from the CICT indicated that Disini has failed to officially communicate their decision to CICT.

"[He] has continued to question the basis for said provision and claimed that they do not have sufficient information to arrive at a decision," the statement added.

The government guidelines indicate that the CICT will commence redelegation procedures in the event that an administrator gives notice of intention to become a registrar, or otherwise fails to comply with the interim provisions of the guidelines within the periods specified.

The technical working group will have representatives from the National Telecommunications Commission, National Computer Center, and the Telecommunications Office.

The TWG will also represent the CICT in discussions with Disini to clarify issues raised on the guidelines.

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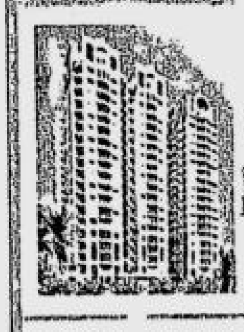

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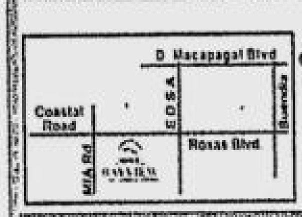

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The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on March 01, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila**, among all interested rice suppliers for the supply of **maximum 400,000 MT, 5% MOLSO non-iron fortified long grain white rice, 15% and 25% brokens and 100,000 MT, 5% MOLSO iron fortified long grain white rice, minimum 25% brokens in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags** with an appropriated budget of **Php7.526B** for non-iron fortified and **Php1.882B** for iron fortified rice, from corporate resources. **Source countries shall be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Pakistan and/or U.S.** Breakdown as follows:

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a. Documents Against Payment (D/P), Mandatory bid
b. Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred eighty (180) days from B/L date, mandatory bid
c. Documents against Acceptance (D/A) or Deferred Payment with a tenor of:
  c.1 three hundred sixty (360) days from B/L date, optional bid
  c.2 seven hundred twenty (720) days from B/L date, optional bid.

Arrival Period	Percentage of Volume to be Offered
Not Later Than April 2005	At least 60%
Not Later Than May 2005	Balance

Government suppliers and private suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last two (2) years (2003/2004) and do not have a bad track record may be awarded the following:

SUPPLIER	IRON-FORTIFIED	NON-IRON FORTIFIED
government (with good track record)	max. 100,000 MT	max. 300,000 MT
private (with good track record)	max 25,000 MT	max. 25,000 MT
government/private (without track record)	max. 15,000 MT	max. 15,000 MT

However, suppliers and/or source companies with pending import-related accounts/liability prior 2003 are considered to have bad track records and are not allowed to participate in the bid. Suppliers without any track record with NFA, may be awarded a maximum of 15,000 MT each for iron-fortified and non-iron fortified rice.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification. Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements may be secured starting 31 January 2005 thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Chief III, **Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.**

The terms of reference and bid documents will be available from January 31 to February 23, 2005 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on February 15, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of bids will be on March 01, 2005 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila. Opening of bids will start exactly at 10:00 a.m.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – Jan. 31 & Feb. 7, 2005)

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(2) SEWING MACHINE MECHANICS

Qualifications:
- With at least 2 years experience in Industrial Sewing Machine maintenance such as **SINGLE NEEDLE MACHINE, 4-THREAD OVERLOCK MACHINE, COVER STITCH MACHINE, SPECIAL MACHINES**
- Male, at least 25 years old
- Willing to work overtime

Applicants may come for interview, Mondays-Fridays, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. only.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (AUSAID)
PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Invitation for Applications for the Position of Provincial Activity Officer

BACKGROUND:
The Philippine Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) is a long running Australian small-grants scheme that provides support for community based activities. It is funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). PACAP is now entering a new five year phase which will be implemented by the Australian company, Hassall and Associates International (HAI) in association with the Philippine company, Sustainable Development Solutions (SDS). During this new phase there will be a further shift of PACAP's focus to the southern Philippines. AusAID has identified five target Provinces in which one component of PACAP's intervention will concentrate. This component is called the Focused Community Assistance Scheme (FOCAS) and the selected Provinces are Agusan del Sur, Bohol, Misamis Occidental, Northern Samar, and Surigao del Norte.
HAI and SDS now invite applications from suitably qualified personnel for the position of Provincial Activity Officer (PAO). There will be one PAO appointed within each Province and it is preferred if the applicant is a full time resident of the Province. The PAO will be the "face" of PACAP in the Province and thus should be dynamic, well presented, and trustworthy.

JOB DESIGNATION **Provincial Activity Officer, PACAP**
REPORTS TO : Area Manager, PACAP
SPECIFIC DUTIES:
1) Establish and maintain the PACAP Provincial Office;
2) Assist the Provincial Stakeholder Committee (PSC), and other PACAP stakeholders to develop the Provincial Engagement Strategy and contribute to the Strategic Guidance framework;
3) Act as secretariat to the Provincial Stakeholder Committee;
4) Under the direction of the Area Manager and PSC, assist with the implementation of one or more Focused Community Assistance Schemes (FOCAS) in each province including support to the establishment and strengthening of a FOCAS Management Committee for each scheme.
5) Appraises activity proposals developed and prepare Activity Appraisal Reports
6) Conduct regular monitoring of ongoing PACAP activities and prepare reports on monitoring visits
7) Provide technical assistance to implementing partners during the development and implementation phases of the activities
8) Liaise with non-government organizations, government and other institutions, as appropriate, during the appraisal and monitoring of individual activities
9) Liaise with other assistance projects or activities implemented by government, donors or civil society and ensure PACAP activities integrate with these where appropriate
10) Provide assistance to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of PACAP
11) Perform other related functions that may be assigned by the Area Manager

CORE COMPETENCIES:
- Ability to analyse, appraise, monitor and review relevant policy, program, project and/or resource management matters
- Ability to implement and monitor development and financial programs
- Adaptability, sound judgement and ability to prioritize workload effectively
- Effective communication, interpersonal and teamwork abilities, including an ability to build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders
- Proven ability to prepare written proposals, reports and papers, and perform committee secretariat functions
- Good appreciation of social, economic and cultural issues affecting aid delivery and Australia's aid program
- Ability to utilise various information technology systems

Applications:
Interested applicants should prepare their:
1. Curriculum Vitae including the names and contact details of two referees
2. A letter of application outlining how their skills match the Core Competencies identified above. The letter should not exceed 3 A4 pages.

The Application Letter and CV should be either posted, faxed, or emailed to:

Jonas Tetangco
Program Manager (PACAP)
Sustainable Development Solutions
Unit 204 Jade Centre Building
105 Shaw Boulevard
1600 Pasig City Metro Manila
Philippines

Phone: +63 (02) 9102907
Facsimile: +63 (02) 6339661
Email: jonas@sds.com.ph

Closing Date for applications is **5:00pm on Wednesday 9 February 2005.**

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Thursday, February 9,
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Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Misamis Oriental
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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R A No 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **RENATO A. TANGO** has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from **ELMO** to **RENATO**. In the Certificate of Live Birth of **ELMO TANGO** who was born on March 20, 1952 at **NAGUILIAN BALLESTEROS, CAGAYAN** and whose parents are **DOROTEO M. TANGO** and **AURELIA AMANCIO**.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than February 15 2005

(Sgd) **NORMA S. DIPUTADO**
City Civil Registrar

(PDI–Feb 7 & 14, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that Stock Certificate No. M197B representing one (1) proprietary share in Sta. Elena Golf Club, Inc. owned by Philips Semiconductors Philippines, Inc. has been lost.

(PDI--Jan. 28, Feb. 4 & 7, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
National Power Corporation
MAGAT RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PLANT
Brgy. Gen. Aguinaldo, Ramon, Isabela

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NPC-Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant (MHEPP) is inviting interested private janitorial and manpower agencies for the SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS/ EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES AND SUPERVISION RELATED TO JANITORIAL/LAWN AND GARDEN/LANDSCAPING AND SUPPLY OF TECHNICAL, SKILLED, SEMI-SKILLED, UNSKILLED AND CLERICAL SUPPORT MANPOWER SERVICES for a contract period of two (2) years with an Approved Budget for the Contract of P 8,900,000.00.

Applicant(s) who may Apply for Eligibility and to Bid shall meet the following requirements:

1. Duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and/or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); or
2. Duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), in case of Cooperative.

Complete set of Eligibility and Bid Documents shall be available for issuance starting **February 08, 2005** up to **February 21, 2005**, upon submission and presentation of photocopy of SEC/DTI/CDA to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) c/o the Secretariat, Administration Division between 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM during weekdays and payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P 1,500.00).**

Pre-bid Conference and Opening of Bids (Single Stage Bidding) will be on the following dates:

Pre-bid Conference	*Submission & Opening of Bids*
Date: ***March 04, 2005***	*Date:* ***March 16, 2005***
Time: ***9:00 AM***	*Time:* ***9:00 AM***
Venue: ***MHEP Conference Room***	*Venue:* ***MHEP Conference Room***

The determination of eligibility shall be based on the submission of the required documents, utilizing the prescribed forms and using the criteria stated in the Eligibility Guidelines, Instruction to Bidders and Section 23.11 of the IRR of RA 9184.

The bidder with Lowest Calculated Bid will be subject to Post-qualification procedure before an award is made. Bide Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget shall be rejected and returned outright.

W. R. FERRER
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Feb. 7 & 14, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development – V
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Naga City
☎ 811-7802 loc. 36 • 473-8936; 473-2334

January 27, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Bicol Medical Center (BMC) invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders who are qualified to participate in the following projects:
    a. *Project:* Procurement of Various Pharmaceuticals
    Approved Budget for the Contract: TWENTY ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED FIFTY FOUR THOUSAND PESOS (PhP21,254,000.00)
    Release of Bid Documents: February 7 to March 4, 2005
    Cost of Bid Documents : TWO THOUSAND PESOS (PhP2,000.00)
    Pre-Bid Conference: March 4, 2005 9:00 a.m. BMC Auditorium Bid Opening: March 18, 2005 9:00 a.m. BMC Auditorium
    b. *Project:* Procurement of Medical Gases
    Approved Budget for the Contract: TWO MILLION FIFTY NINE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED NINETY TWO PESOS (PhP2,059,762.00)
    Release of Bid Documents: February 7 to March 10, 2005
    Cost of Bid Documents: EIGHT HUNDRED PESOS (PhP800.00)
    Pre-Bid Conference: March 10, 2005 9:00 am, BMC Library
    Bid Opening: March 21, 2005 9:00 am BMC Library
2. Eligibility of prospective Bidders to participate will be based on compliance to eligibility requirements, using pass/fail non-discretionary criteria, as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), *The Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA)*, and is open to all organizations with at least sixty (60%) percent interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. The process for eligibility check is described in Clause 12 Section II of the Instructions to Bidders. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only those Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check shall be opened and the Purchase Order (PO) awarded to the Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid, provided the Bidder concerned passes the post qualification process.
3. Interested Bidders who wish to inspect the Bidding Documents and obtain further information should contact the BAC Secretariat c/o Supply Section, Bicol Medical Center, Naga City, Telephone No. 473-2334; 473-8936, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents per project may be purchased upon submission of a written application to the following address:

    Dr. RODOLFO C. URSUA
    Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
    Bicol Medical Center
    Naga City
5. Bids must be delivered to the above address on the specified date and time per project. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than, a percentage of the approved budget, in any of the following forms/terms:
    a) Cash, certified check, cashier's/manager's check, Bank draft, or irrevocable letter of credit – One Percent (1%)
    b) Bank Guarantee – One & A Half Percent (1-1/2%)
    c) GSIS Surety Bond - Two & A Half Percent (2-1/2%)
6. The BMC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to issuance of the Award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder of Bidders.

(Sgd.) *RODOLFO C. URSUA, MD,FPCS,FPUA*
Medical Specialist II and Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI- Feb 7 & 14, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Malaybalay City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Provincial Governor's Office

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (RE-BID)

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Province of Bukidnon, invites interested Suppliers, Distributors and Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following projects:

NAME OF PROJECTS	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	SOURCE OF FUND
I. DRUGS & MEDICINES	P9,237,729.60	General Fund & Capitation
II. MEDICAL AND LAB. SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS	P2,006,283.69	General Fund & Capitation
III. MEDICAL AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT	P1,175,000.00	Trust Fund

This is for the use of Seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and twenty-two (22) Provincial Health Stations of the Province of Bukidnon. Immediate delivery or a maximum of fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of the purchase order is strictly required. Goods will be delivered at the Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City.

Schedule of activities are as follows:

1. February 01, 2005 - Issuance of eligibility requirements
2. February 04, 2005 - Pre-procurement Conference
3. February 08, 2005 - Pre-bid conference (BAC office)
4. February 09, 2005 - Issuance of bid documents
5. February 18, 2005 - 9:00am Eligibility Check
6. February 21, 2005 - 9:00am deadline for the submission of bids.
7. February 21, 2005 - 10:00am opening of bids in sealed envelop.

Only responsible and interested suppliers are qualified to participate upon presentation of the following:

1. Business Registration-DTI/SEC
2. VAT/BIR Tax clearance certificate
3. Mayor's permit
4. License to operate issued by BFAD
5. CPR certificate for Product requiring certificate
6. Certificate of exclusive distributorship
7. List of products
8. Company's pharmacy license
9. Accomplished track record
10. Sworn statement of disclosure of relations
11. Supplier's audited financial statement
12. NFCC's computation or commitment from a licensed bank or cash deposit of at least equal to 10% of the ABC of the contract to bid.
13. Statement of prospective bidder that they are not Blacklisted or barred from bidding by the Gov't or any of its offices.
14. Special power of attorney issued by authorized company official with authority to transact business and sign in behalf of the owner.

NOTE: Accredited Suppliers need not to submit the said documents.

Complete sets of eligibility requirements and bid documents may be obtained at the BAC Secretariat at the Provincial General Services Office, Province of Bukidnon, upon payment of non refundable fee of P250.00/set. Duly accomplished eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope addressed to BAC chairman c/o BAC Secretariat.

The provision of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations, shall govern all particulars relative to eligibility, bid bond, performance bond, pre-bid conference, bid evaluation and award of contract.

The BAC of the Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject all bids thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that is considered most advantageous to the Province of Bukidnon

For any inquiry, please feel free to call BAC secretariat at telephone number 088-221-25-37 or 088-813-33-53.

(Sgd.) MR. JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
BAC Chairman/Provincial Administrator

(PDI–Feb. 7 & 14, 2005)

PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY
7th FLOOR LEGASPI TOWERS 200 PASEO DE ROXAS, CITY OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA
TELEPHONE NUMBERS 817-47-11 • 817-47-12 • 817-47-13
817-5017 • 817-5018 • 817-5014 • 817-1441/46
FAX (632) 815-2662 • 815-2660 • 817-3127
ZIP CODE 1220

INVITATION TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY (PRA)** formerly known as the ***PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY (PEA)*** is inviting interested parties to participate in the public bidding for the lease of about 1.71 hectares for mixed use purposes and landscape development of about 6.86 hectares of its property known as the ***ESPLANADE***, located at the west end (Bay side) of the Central Business Park I – Island A (CBP I-A) Bay City, Pasay City.

Qualified participants are:

1.) Any Filipino citizen of legal age,
2.) Any partnership, association or corporation, public or private, of which at least 60% of the capital stock or of any interest in said capital stock belongs wholly to citizens of the Philippines and which is created and organized under the laws of the Philippines.

Interested parties may obtain the Terms of Reference and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 in cash or Manager's Check starting on January 17, 2005 until February 18, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the office of the Secretariat, PRA Real Estates Bids and Award Committee (PREBAC) 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo De Roxas, Makati City.

Further information, inquiries may be made to the PREBAC in the above address with telephone numbers 817-4711 to 817-4713 (trunklines).

(Sgd.) **TEODORICO C. TAGUINOD**
General Manager/CEO

(PDI--Jan. 7, 11, 19, 28, Feb. 3 & 7, 2005)

VICTORIAS
MILLING COMPANY, INC.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC., Victorias City, Negros Occidental invites interested and qualified independent job contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the **following projects/services, to wit:**

Cluster A: Housekeeping I
- A1. Gathering and Hauling Washed-out/Dropped Canes within VMC Compound
- A2. General Housekeeping of Mills & Boilers
- A3. Bagacillo Collection & General Housekeeping of the Boiling House
- A4. Carbonate Mud Cleaning & General Housekeeping of the Refinery

Cluster B: Maintenance
- B1. Cleaning of Evaporators, Vacuum Pans & Heat Transfer Tubes
- B2. Reconditioning of Filters & Sewing of Filter Cloths

Cluster C: Janitorial
- C1. Hauling/Handling Spilled/Rejected Sugar & Refinery Additives
- C2. Hauling of carbon, chemicals and additives

Cluster D: Housekeeping II (Sugar Warehousing Activities)
- D1. Refined Sugar Warehouse
- D2. Raw Sugar Warehouse

Cluster E: Foundry Shop Projects
- E1. Breaking Mill Roller shells, risers, couplings/Cutting-off of Mill Roller Risers

Interested bidders must submit the following requirements:
- VMC accreditation papers for those who are not yet accredited
- Registered and in good standing with SEC or DTI
- Certificate of Registration from BIR
- Certificate of Membership from SSS, Philhealth, HDMF, PAG-IBIG, etc.
- Certificate from the Department of Labor and Employment
- Has a good track record and satisfactory performance as attested by at least three (3) clients
- Latest audited Financial Statements certified by a Certified Public Accountant and stamped by BIR

Pre-qualification forms are available at the MCD Office, VMC Millsite and at the VMC Makati Procurement Office during office hours from **February 10 to 16, 2005** upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00. Deadline for submission of pre-qualification papers is on **February 19, 2005**. The pre-bid conference will be held on **February 24, 2005, 3:00 P.M. at the HRD Conference Room, VMC Millsite, Victorias City, Negros Occidental.** The bidding date will be announced thereafter. Sealed bids shall be accompanied by a bidder's bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the bid price in the form of cashier's/manager's check payable to Victorias Milling Company, Inc.

For further inquiries, please contact Messrs. Carlos S. Quiatchon, Dan C. Labrador, Ramon P. Pun-an or Edwin D. Togonon at VMC Millsite at telephone numbers **(034)399-3696 or (034)399-3699 and (local)2309**, and Mr. Ernesto Oligo, Jr. at VMC Makati Procurement Office at telephone numbers **(02)890-5256 and (02)890-7062**, or e-mail us at mcd@victoriasmilling.com and visit our website www.victoriasmilling.com.

Victorias Milling Company, Inc. reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder/s for any expense or loss that they may incur in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA V. ILAGAN**
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI--Feb. 7, 2005)

PMAP seminars

THE PERSONNEL Management Association of the Philippines is sponsoring a seminar on Identifying Training Needs and Targeting the Training Outcomes, which will be held on Feb. 10 to 11. At the end of this program, participants will be able to design a training needs analysis project, including a statement of the desired training outcomes, and prepare a personal action plan for implementation. Registration fee is P5,600 for PMAP members and P7,100 for non PMAP members. A two-day workshop on Competency Career Development is scheduled on Feb. 10 to 11. It is a completely hands-on learning activity which heightens the individual awareness of the value of a competency based career and individual development planning. Registration fee is P5,600 for PMAP members and P7,100 for non PMAP members. The program entitled Managing the Rewards Management Workshop which is an introductory module that focuses on the basic principles and processes of rewards management, from planning, design, administration and communication is scheduled on Feb. 11. Registration fee is P3,400 for PMAP members and P4,900 for Non PMAP members. All programs will be held at PMAP Center in Mandaluyong City. For reservations, please contact The Human Resource Management Development Center at telephone numbers 726-1581; 726-1588 or 726-1532; email address: maylene.gatdula@pmap.org.ph or you may visit the website: www.pmap.org.ph

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Republic of the Philippines
Regional Trial Court
National Capital Judicial Region
Manila
Branch 1

IN THE MATTER OF THE TESTATE ESTATE OF THE LATE PAZ A. DE TUASON.

MARIA PAZ GODINEZ LOPEZ, Petitioner, — **SP. PROC. 03-105769**

x- -x

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

LETTERS TESTAMENTARY having been issued in the above-entitled case in favor of MARIA PAZ GODINEZ LOPEZ residing at No. 7 King Fisher, Green Meadows, Quezon City. Notice is hereby issued requiring all persons having claims for money against the decedent PAZ DE TUAZON, arising from contact, express or implied, whether the same be due, not due or contingent, for funeral expenses and expenses of the last sickness of the said decedent and judgment for money against her, to file said claims with this Office within six (6) months after the date of the first publication of this Notice, serving a copy thereof upon the aforementioned MARIA PAZ GODINEZ LOPEZ, the appointed Executrix of the above-entitled case.

The Executrix is hereby ordered to cause the immediate publication of this Notice in a newspaper of general circulation for three (3) consecutive weeks and its posting for the same period in four (4) public places in the city of Manila, decedent's last place of residence.

WITNESS THE HONORABLE TITA BUGHAO ALISUAG, this 19th day of November 2004, Manila City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) ROSALINDA S. MEDINACELI-GEPIGON
Clerk of Court V

(PDI- Jan. 24, 31 & Feb. 7, 2005)

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JUNIOR PHILIPPINE SOCIETY for TRAINING and DEVELOPMENT
invites
ALL PSYCHOLOGY, HUMAN RESOURCE, AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS
to its 2ND ANNUAL CONVENTION

Jumpstart '05:
Strengthening the Youth's HROD Competencies
February 26, 2005
Golden Bay Hotel, Manila City

Convention Goals:

This one day of mega learning event will feature plenary and concurrent sessions, that will:

- *Provide venue to further expand knowledge and develop needed skills in becoming an effective future HROD practitioner.*
- *Impart latest technologies and trends in Training and Development profession.*
- *Raise competence and character level of JPSTD members who wish to pursue HROD career.*
- *Build strong network of student-volunteers to support the JPSTD mission-vision.*

Session Tracks:

To address the varied interests and current requirements of the delegates, the convention will showcase two (2) concurrent session tracks:

1. *Character-Based Competencies*
   This track focuses on Intrapersonal and Interpersonal competencies as building blocks in the development of the youth's right attitude, values and emotional maturity to face the challenges in their future workplace.
2. *Professional-Innovative Competencies*
   This track focuses on Leadership and Managerial competencies required to all budding HROD professionals for them to become change agents and strategic partners in the achievement of their future companies' business objectives.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.freewebs.com/jpstdwebsite
Or call and email us:
PSTD Center
Suite 904, 9/F Cityland Condominium 10 Tower II,
H.V. dela Costa cor. Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
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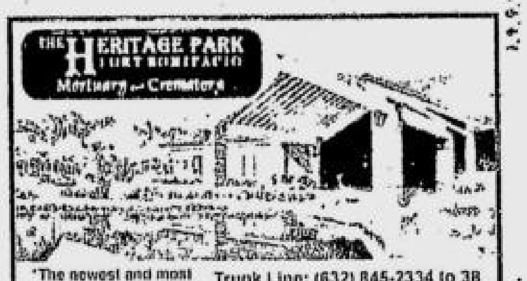
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"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

ROSARIO "CHARING" PUEBLO

Peacefully joined our Creator on the 5th of February, 2005 at the age of 86.

Her husband **Jose Sr.** (+); children **Renato** (+), **Edgardo Sr., Elizabeth** & **Jose Jr.**; grandchildren; great grandchildren; other relatives request readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Her body lies in state at the Memorial Chapel of the Assumption Pasig Cathedral. Interment at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery follows the 1 p.m. Holy Mass tomorrow, February 8, at the Pasig Cathedral.

I was glad when they said to me
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."
Psalms 122:1

MANUEL BUENCAMINO DE LEON

*Peacefully returned to the arms of Our Father on the 4th of February, 2005 at the age of 89, joining his beloved wife, **Melly** (†), his son, **Bubut** (†), and his sister, **Carning** (†)*

His children **Ching, Manito, Mike** and **Oya**; his sister **Bading Eraña**; his grandchildren **Johnny** and **Charlene, Mark** and **Barni, Carlos** and **Vicki, Margarita** and **Stuart**, and **Bea** and **Marcus**; his great-grandchildren **Max, Claudia, Alec, Carolina**, and **Enzo**; his nephews and nieces **Nenita, Rene** and **Raoul, Bololong** and **Rowena, BG** and **Tim, Joselito, Boopsie, Val** and **Bianca, Luz** and **Jorge**, and **Paeng** and **Marivic**; relatives and friends request the readers to pray for him to the Father Almighty to grant him eternal peace.

His body lies in state at No. 35 Broadway (Doña Juana Rodriguez), New Manila, Quezon City. There will be mass at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. The funeral mass will be held today, the 7th of February, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in New Manila, after which cremation will follow at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the CHILDREN'S HOUR will be appreciated.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Tel. No. (047) 223-1692

REV. FR. JAMES VINCENT RYAN, C.SS.R.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer Vice-Province of Manila
Died in the Grace of Our Lord
on the 3rd of February 2005 at the age of 88.

Born on April 17th, 1916
Professed on February 2nd, 1935
Ordained on the 16th, March 1941
He died in the Nazareth House in Ballarat, Australia.
The Mass will be on February 8, 2005, Tuesday at 5:45 P.M. at the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Church, Baclaran, Parañaque City

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments
OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known that the real property consisting of a house & lot situated in #1870 Sagu St., Dasmarinas Village, Makati City registered in the name of Ma. Lourdes Rodriguez Soliven under TCT No. 220864, issued by the register of Deeds of Makati has been sold to Mukesh S. Advani by virtue of a deed of Absolute Sale dated January 19, 2005, Said title originated from TCT No. 275506 issued by the Register of deeds of Makati in the name of the previous owner Eugenio J. Puyat.

Any Protest or Inquiry about the foregoing sale may be entertained at telephone no. 643-6993/ 94, 641-7387.

(Sgd.) MUKESH S. ADVANI
Buyer

(PDI- Feb. 7 & 12, 2005)

HAZEL JENNIFER MUÑIZ ANCHETA-JOVER

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **HAZEL JENNIFER MUÑIZ ANCHETA-JOVER** whose picture appears here is no longer connected with the TV show **WEDTV... Say I Do to an Island Wedding and Redfinn Productions Inc. since October 29, 2004.**

Hazel Ancheta-Jover, or any entity purportedly represented by her, is not the owner of WedTV. Mrs Jover was also never an officer, board member, nor a stockholder of Redfinn. Any transaction entered by the said person will not be honored by the TV show & the company.

WedTV is the copyright and property of Redfinn Productions. WedTV will not be changing its title or its program in any way. Any person/company misrepresenting or without the proper authority from Redfinn shall be dealt with the full force of the law.

(PDI–Feb. 7, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : Feb. 24, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1 Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

Item	Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
	SCHEDULE-III	
-1-	One (1) lot: Unserviceable Items consisting of Eleven (11) units Junk Motor Vehicles, One (1) unit cannibalized Fork-Lift, One (1) unit Fuel Oil Tank for dismantling, One (1) Over-Head Crane Assembly inside Power House for dismantling and One (1) Over-Head Crane Assembly outside Power House for dismantling. Located at the defunct Amlan Diesel Power Plant within the TRANSCO S/S compound in Amlan, Negros Oriental	P 733,600.00 per lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGERS'/CASHIERS' CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 or 2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY.

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/schedule from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. / Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384 **Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, February 23, 2005.**

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – February 7, 8 & 9, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT
6th Flr. SEC Bldg. EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
Tel. Nos. 725-8508, 726-2264 Fax 727-2990
Website http://www.sec.gov.ph

IN THE MATTER OF

ALJEMS FINANCE CORPORATION
(Formerly: Aljem's Credit Investors Corporation : APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY TO OPERATE AS A FINANCING COMPANY

NOTICE AND ORDER

Notice is hereby given that the above-named corporation has filed an application for a Certificate of Authority to engage in financing business in accordance with Sections 2,4, and 5 of the Rules and Regulations to Implement the Provisions of R.A. No. 8556 (The Financing Company Act of 1998). Its principal office shall be located in Davao City.

The applicant's capital structure is as follows

Authorized Capital Stock	P 20,000,000.00
Subscribed Capital Stock -	11,000,000.00
Paid-up Capital Stock	10,000,000.00

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation:

Name	Position
Pacifico V. Dizon	Director/President
Michael Thadeo C. Dizon	Director/Vice-President
Amelia C. Dizon	Director/Treasurer
Lucille D. Mijares	Director
Jessica Kim D. Ros	Director/Secretary

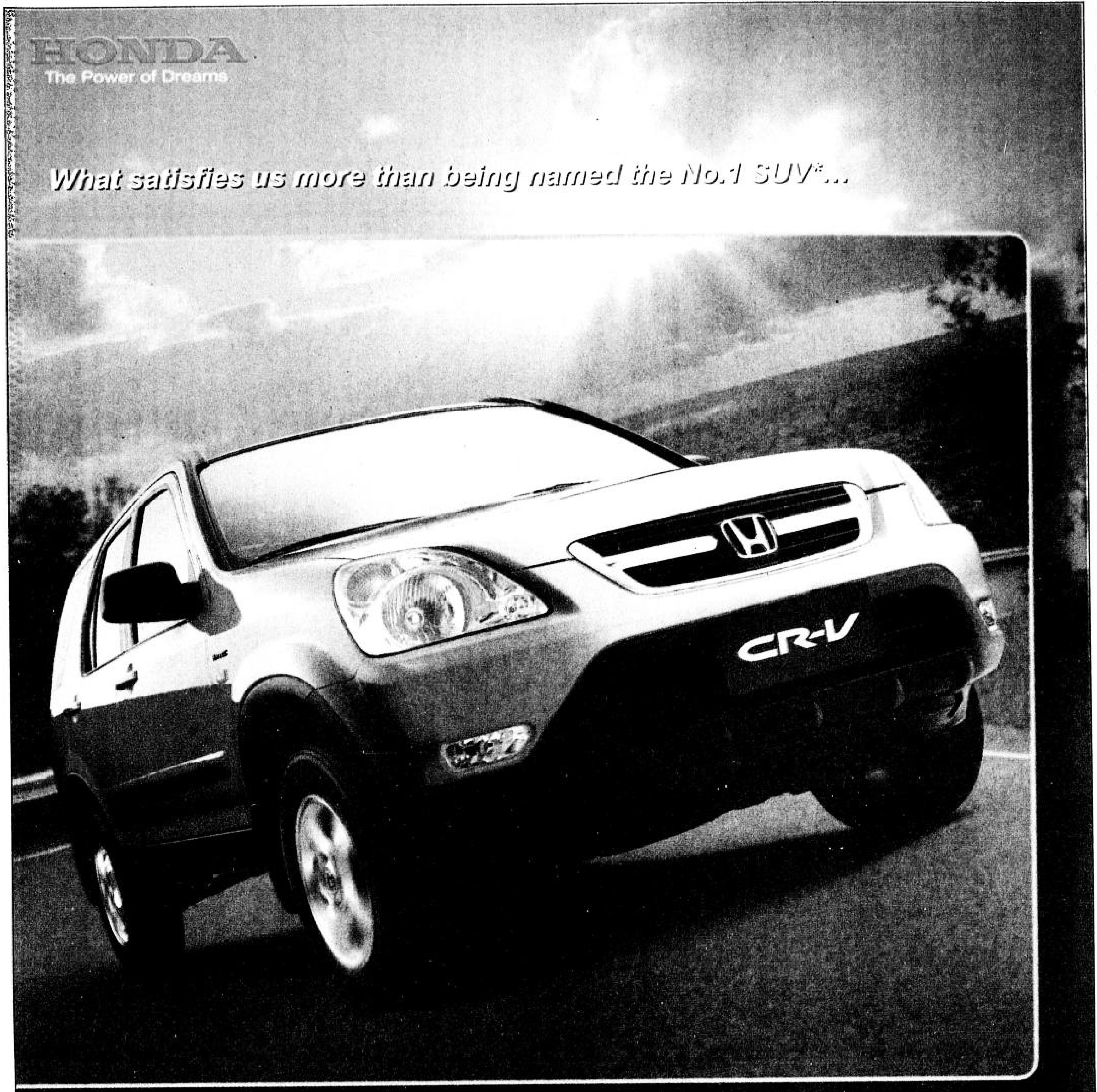
This Notice and Order shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks and shall be simultaneously posted in a public and conspicuous place in the City/Municipality where the office of the company is proposed to be located and in the office of the Commission

Any interested party may oppose the application in writing personally or through counsel within two (2) weeks after the last publication of the Notice. If the Commission finds that the requirements of R.A. No. 8556, the Implementing Rules and Regulations and other pertinent laws have been complied with and no valid reason exists for the disapproval of the subject application, the Commission shall take appropriate action on said application

SO ORDERED.
December 11, 2004

(Sgd.) JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

(PDI–Feb. 7 & 14, 2005)



What satisfies us more than being named the No.1 SUV...*

...is having to give it back to you.

Our CR-V couldn't have been the country's No.1* without you. So in return, we'll give you these great financing deals to make owning a new Honda easy for you!

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  50% DP, 18 mos. on Jazz 1.3 A MT
  50% DP, 12 mos. on Civic and CR-V
- Low monthly installments!
- Low downpayment!
- As much as P35,000 discount for cash buyers!

Model/Variant	SRP	[illegible]	[illegible]
CITY 1.3 A MT	P 549,000	P 82,350	P 5,822
Jazz 1.3 A MT	P 590,000	P 88,500	P 6,171
CIVIC 1.6 VTi MT	P 740,000	P 111,000	P 7,632
CR-V 2.0 4X2 5P MT	P 1,009,000	P 151,350	P 10,646

* All plans are subject to bank approval (BPI and RCBC)

Promo ends Feb. 28, 2005

*Based on CAMPI Sales Reports 2004, SUV Category

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0491 Series of 2005

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Honda Cars Pasig	Tel No (02) 634 2730 Fax No 637 2087
Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc	Tel. Nos. (02) 712 6850 to 61. Fax No. 737 8599
Honda Cars Shaw	Tel No (02) 717 1681 Fax No 725 7073
Honda Cars Manila	Tel No (02) 562 4548 Fax No 564 7336
Honda Cars Fairview	Tel Nos (02) 9352655 9352617, Fax No 9357604
Honda Cars Marikina	Tel Nos. (02) 9426202, 9980512, Fax No 9423561

Provincial

Honda Cars Cebu Inc	Tel No (032) 2313602, Fax No (032) 2314486
Honda Cars San Pablo, Inc.	Tel Nos (049) 5627713 to 14, Fax No (049) 5627712
Honda Cars Pangasinan, Inc.	Tel Nos (075) 5221488 to 89 Fax No (075) 5173739
Honda Cars Davao Inc	Tel Nos (082) 2217406 2222171 Fax No (082) 2217407
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Sun lashes out at Smart, Globe

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN CELLULAR has accused Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc. of using their smaller wireless units to prevent the Gokongwei-owned Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc. from attracting more subscribers using its 24/7 unlimited, within-network plan.

"These two giants that are raking in billions in profits yearly are trying to prevent us from offering good value and better alternative to consumers instead of reviewing their own pricing mechanism and giving back some of their gains to their subscribers," said William Pamintuan, Digitel senior vice president, who was referring to the rival telcos.

Pamintuan pointed out that in other countries like the United States, calls within network are unlimited for a certain fee, just like Sun Cellular.

Globe's Innove Communications Inc. that operates Touch Mobile and Smart's Pilipino Telephone Corp. that runs Talk N' Text have asked the National Telecommunications Commission in separate petitions to stop Digitel's Sun Cellular from offering the 24/7 plan.

Innove and Piltel have accused Sun Cellular of predatory and discriminatory pricing. Globe ended 2004 with 12.5 million subscribers while Smart is expected to announce a customer base of more than 19 million for the same year. Sun Cellular said it ended 2004 with more than 1.1 million clients.

The NTC is scheduled to dialog with the executives of the three wireless players today to see how these issues could be resolved.

According to the Digitel official, the regulator could not protect the duopoly of Globe and Smart that are already making huge profits at the expense of consumers, who stand to gain from Sun Cellular's 24/7 plan.

Pamintuan said predatory pricing could only be applied to dominant players. Sun Cellular, which has less than 5 percent of the market, cannot be considered as such, he said.

Despite the challenges, Sun Cellular is expanding its network daily to meet the growing demand, Pamintuan said. The company now has more than 1,300 cellular sites as it approached its second year of operations in March.

Pamintuan explained that the 24/7 plan is on top of the monthly service fee required of every subscriber. For instance, subscribers to Sun Cellular's lowest postpaid plan of P350 could avail themselves of the plan by buying the P250 or P100 card.

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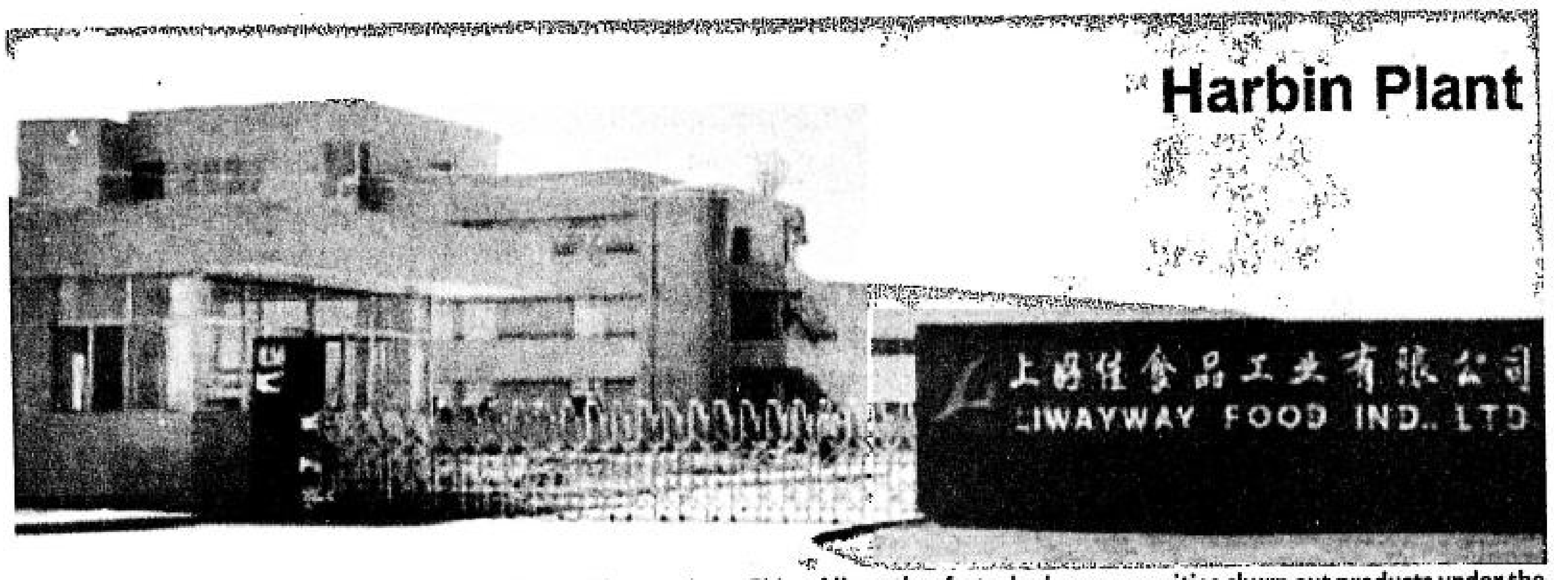
'Gawgaw' firm doing well in 'mano po' land

By Ronnel W. Domingo



LIWAYWAY Foods Industrial Ltd.'s factory in Harbin City, northern China. Nine other factories in as many cities churn out products under the brand "Oishi Shanghaojia" in the world's largest market.

A FILIPINO company has been quietly and successfully extending its arms overseas, proving that local talent is at par with the world's best.

Filipinos, 30 years and older, recognize Liwayway Marketing Corp., as the brand of *gawgaw* or starch, ubiquitous in the laundry activities of the '50s to the '70s.

The brand name was reinforced by a jingle that blazed on the radio every morning.

During those era, clothes were treated with starch before ironing.

Ironically LMC never went into the manufacture of gawgaw, they were simply repacking it.

This marked the strategy of the company for 20 years.

In LMC's first 20 years, the business strategy was to try out more and more products as opportunities presented themselves, mainly on the distribution side.

They had a lot of misses but gawgaw was a winner.

It was in the early '70s however that the company created a brand that created its current trademark.

History

In 1946, Chan Lib and his wife See Ying started a business repacking flour and coffee products.

The family business was incorporated in 1966, the same year it expanded into the distribution of pomade, candles, candies and sauces.

The second-generation management led by Manuel Chan made the pivotal step in 1974 that established the company into the business that it is known for today.

Diversifying into the manufacturing of snack foods such as "Oishi Prawn Crackers" and "Kirei Yummy Flakes," the move proved to be so promising that the company eventually concentrated on this.

As the company invested in more sophisticated equipment and developed new products, "Oishi" became the patent brand for all its product lines which now include cereals, popcorn, powdered juices and sauces.

According to London-based Datamonitor, which specializes in industry analysis, LMC was the second-largest player in the Philippine food sector in 2003.

Datamonitor said the market leader then was Universal Robina Corp., itself a home-grown business that is expanding overseas.

Media-shy company officials say the firm adopted as brand "Oishi"—the Japanese word for "delicious"—because it used Japanese technology and know-how when it went into the manufacture of snack foods.

Japanese know-how

After two decades of nurturing a strong presence in the local market as well as a catalog of some 50 products, LMC made the great leap by putting up its first units in China in 1993.

The officials say the aim was to "leverage our experiences and expertise in snack food manufacturing by going into markets that are relatively undeveloped or have huge potential."

LMC started in the giant market of China with Shanghai Liwayway Food Industries Ltd. and Shanghai Prawn Cracker Foodstuff Co. Ltd.

The two subsidiaries grew into a network of at least 12 companies located all over the mainland under the Shanghai-based head company Liwayway (China) Co. Ltd.

Liwayway China's products are known to the market under the brand "Oishi Shanghaojia," which in 2001 received the Shanghai Famous Brands award.

"Oishi Shanghaojia"

"This meant that (our brand has) firmly established itself as a major one in Shanghai (and it is moving towards this status) in the rest of China as well."

Aside from a plant in Shanghai, Liwayway China has factories in the cities of Harbin, Zhengzhou, Xuzhou, Suzhou, Ningbo, Changsha, Kunming, Jiangxi and Hubei Hong An.

LMC attributes in success in China to personalized management style that is sensitive to adapting to the local culture.

The officials said it is also due to strategic timing. LMC went to Shanghai relatively early, when Shanghai was still far from the highly-modernized city it is fast becoming and the market was more open to new entrants.

While LMC's local businesses are entirely family-owned, its China companies have minority shareholders.

"Having minority shareholders for the China operations was only because some close friends (of LMC chair Carlos Chan's) in Manila wanted to join the pro

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Metrobank, the country's leading bank in terms of resources & trust assets, launched today the MetroDollar Asian Bond Fund, a US Dollar denominated unit investment trust fund (ULTF) with primary investments in investment grade sovereign and corporate US Dollar fixed income securities of various Asian countries such as, but not limited to, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, India, and Thailand. The fund can also invest in US Treasuries.

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Clients who invest in MetroDollar Asian Bond Fund are rewarded with diversification of risk across multiple investment grade Asian bond markets and credits. Currently, upgrades in the region confirm Asian risks are acceptable while returns are higher than US Treasuries and other safe-haven assets.

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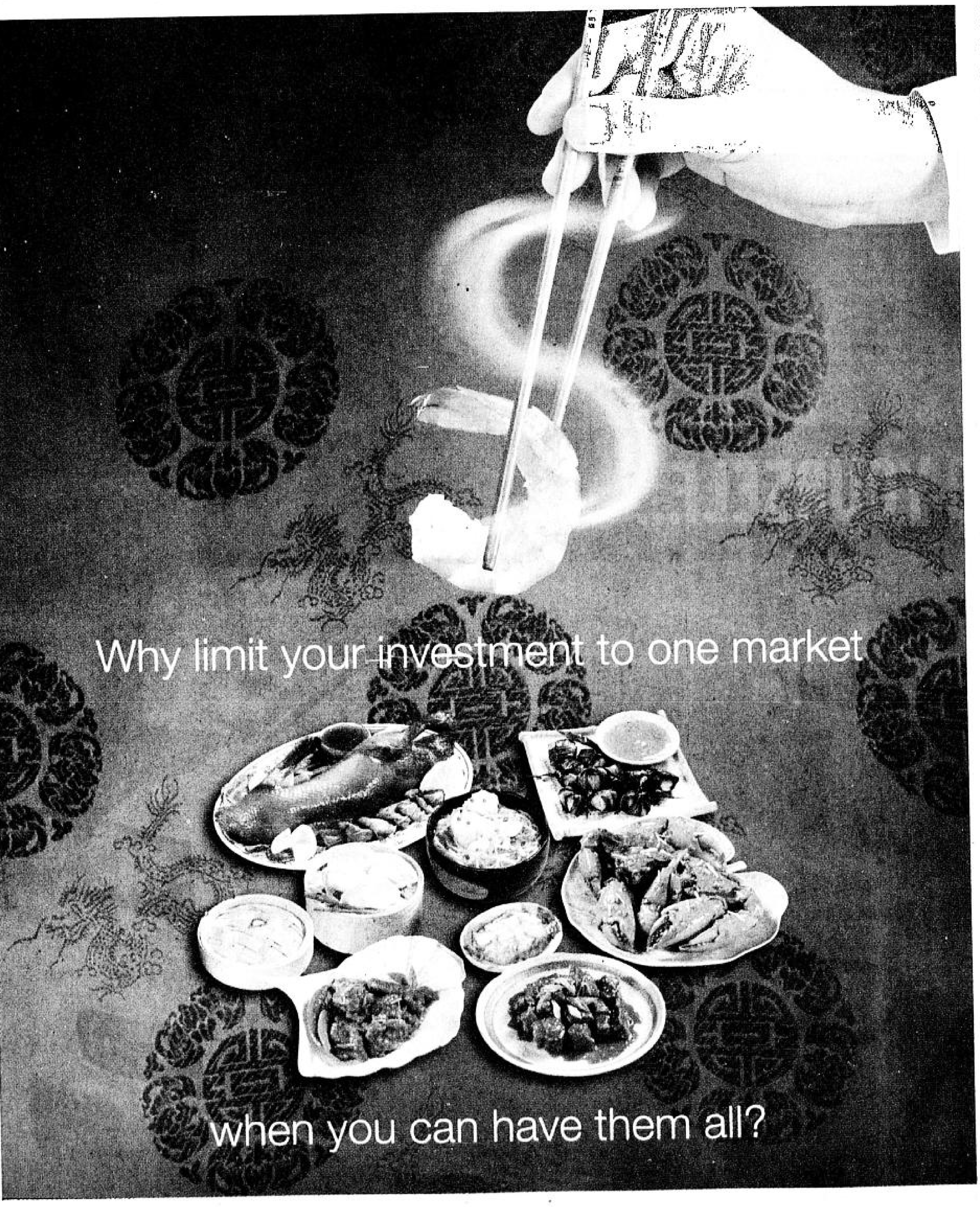
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One thing I learned in life

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Rafael B. Buenaventura

I AM deeply honored to accept the Management Association of the Philippines' award for "Management Man of the Year."

Recognition at home brings to satisfying closure earlier recognition from abroad of our performance record. More than anything else, I look upon this recognition as acknowledgment of our team effort at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to defend the monetary and financial stability of our economy against the multitude of tests and challenges that have confronted it, one after the other.

By the way, before my term ends, I shall have worked with six finance secretaries.

The adage, "your being a good manager is just a reflection of the organization that you are leading," speaks true of my colleagues at the BSP. This award is really in honor of them too, for their passion and diligence to serve our country and people.

I have my predecessor, Governor Gabby Singson to thank for leaving me a very professional and dynamic organization that has definitely been more than equal to the task. I am confident that I will be leaving behind to my successor an even more competent organization.

Average student

Looking back, as a B-average student in school, I never imagined myself becoming Central Bank Governor. It was not in my wildest dreams. Later on, as a banker, I found myself increasingly fascinated by the business of central banking and how the Central Bank is able to exert a powerful influence on the fate of the economy.

A friend reminded me that when I was taking my MBA at the Stern Graduate School of Business in New York. I said, "someday I will become Governor of Central Bank." I forgot about that until I was reminded by her a few years back.

Actually, we promised our father, Antonio Buenaventura, that none of us would serve in government. So when I decided to accept the governorship, I went with my brother Cesar, who is my surrogate father, to the grave of our father to ask him for forgiveness because I knew that I was going against his wishes.

I could not, in conscience, turn away from the opportunity offered me to make a difference for the country. Whether I succeeded, only time and history will tell. It was my Jesuit training that made me believe that I should serve my country. But it was the other great institution—De La Salle College—that help me forge my career in banking.

Some 40 years ago, De La Salle College encouraged its seniors to work full time during the day and do night school—that's how I started in banking. My first job was at the Security Bank and Trust Co. I was a credit investigator.

I worked in the trenches and learned to work with other people—I learned how to optimize my time for study, work and fun. I was fortunate that my first boss was kind and understanding—he was Rafael Rufino Sr., EVP/Treasurer and major shareholder/cofounder of the bank.

Little did I realize then that 40 years later, I would end up with the ultimate "boss"—Maria Victoria, his youngest daughter. That's what you call destiny or kismet.

Huge responsibilities

When I became Bangko Sentral governor in 1999, with the economy and the banking system still wounded by the Asian financial crisis of 1997, I deeply felt the huge responsibility of keeping the peso and the banking system on an even keel against the buffeting waves of crisis and turmoil.

But it was also essential to look beyond the crises and think in terms of building a much sturdier economic ship, impervious and resistant to the angriest political and financial storms.

With the strong support of the Monetary Board and the Bangko Sentral organization, we embarked on a path of deep reforms to uphold our fundamental mandates of ensuring price stability and promoting a strong financial system.

In a major change of strategy, we instituted direct inflation targeting in 2002 as the anchor for monetary policy. This involves an explicit commitment to stay within a pre-announced target range of acceptable inflation outcomes. As such, it involved acceptance of stern self-discipline to achieve greater policy transparency and accountability.

Looking back, that effort has served us in good stead as we continue to enjoy an extended record of relatively low inflation in spite of a very challenging environment.

Preserving the credibility of our commitment to price stability is critical because it affords us the flexibility to confront future

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'Gawgaw' firm . . .

From page B2-1

ject," they explain.

Chinese partners for the China operations do not have equity ownership, so all China operations are actually 100-percent foreign owned—read Filipino.

"(LMC had to have mainland) Chinese partners because the investment climate in China then was not as open as it is today and it was difficult to set up a wholly foreign-owned company without any local partner," the officials said.

The Shanghai government appreciated Liwayway's contribution to the city such that its chair was awarded the White Magnolia Commemoration Medal and the Magnolia Gold Award in 1997 and 1998, respectively.

Named after the official flower of Shanghai, the awards represent the highest honor given to foreigners. Since 1989, only a total of 458 foreigners have been given the White Magnolia Commemoration Medal while only about 150 foreigners have received the Magnolia Gold Award.

In more liberal markets such as those in Southeast Asia, the Chan family retained sole ownership of LMC affiliates.

Keeping the tack of getting the first-mover advantage in undeveloped markets, LMC set up factories in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam in 1997 and in Yangon, Burma in 1999.

In all its overseas markets, LMC has emerged a strong player. In 2003, Liwayway China ranked 161st in terms of sales in the Shanghai Top 500 Industrial Enterprises, a long way up from 274th in 1997.

"(Our products are) distributed nationwide even in small cities. Sales growth is healthy despite fierce competition from both multi-national and local competitors."

Liwayway products in the relatively smaller markets of Vietnam and Burma are also the leading snack brand, according to LMC.

Within this year, LMC expects to start commercial operations of its new businesses in Indonesia and Thailand, where "we can offer something to these more developed market in terms of both quality and product, as well as our Philippine experience on high value at affordable prices."

Back home, LMC is eyeing further expansion of production capacity as well as its product lines, which are being produced in factories in Imus, Cavite and the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Cebu.

Oishi products are also exported to Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong.

THIS FACILITY in Ho Chi Minh City produces Oishi snack foods that is among the leading brands in Vietnam, which adopted an open market economy barely a decade ago.

One thing I learned in life

From page B2-3

shocks that could potentially harm our economy.

That commitment has also made it necessary for us to speak out and raise the alarm on the sustainability of our fiscal situation which is now, finally, beginning to be seriously addressed.

Our commitment to price stability, complements another equally important task, that of promoting financial system stability. With the return of confidence, a robust banking system complemented by a well-functioning capital market will be the foundation for economic growth and development.

Reform efforts

Our reform efforts in the financial sector are clearly pointed in this direction. We have launched programs that strengthen corporate governance and transparency in our banks, complemented by efforts to strengthen depositor and investor protection.

We have pushed our banks to clean up their non-performing assets and bolster their balance sheets primarily through capital build-up. We have also pushed them to upgrade risk management systems and procedures.

We have been overhauling our regulatory policies to achieve: (1) greater conformity with international standards particularly the Basle committee recommendations on bank supervisory practices and on capital adequacy; (2) international accounting standards on reporting of financial transactions; (3) OECD standards on good governance; and (4) FATF recommendations to combat money laundering.

All of these initiatives enhance our ability to avert system-wide failures and mitigate risks.

We are creating a comprehensive credit information system. They will provide better access to credit for small borrowers, lower intermediation costs and support more competitive lending rates.

We have strongly supported the private sector-led initiative to establish the fixed-income exchange that will ensure the efficient trading and settlement of debt securities. We have put much effort in creating a modern real time gross settlement system called the Philpass that is currently widely used in the efficient and safe settlement of large value transactions including inter-bank trades in both government securities and foreign exchange.

Third party securities

We are currently institutionalizing a third party securities custodianship system to ensure proper delivery of securities to their investors for better protection of all parties. We want to avoid the fraudulent multiple sale of government securities, as what happened in the Bancap scandal.

We want to stop the practice of undocumented transactions that would put financial institutions at grave risks. More than just promoting systemic stability, the third party custody system, in conjunction with the fixed income exchange infrastructure, will constitute a solid foundation for truly deepening the domestic capital market and empowering investors.

As the financial system grows in complexity and sophistication, we have moved to achieve a more coordinated supervision of financial services in partnership with other regulators.

The BSP, along with SEC, Insurance Commission and PDIC have voluntarily formed the Financial Sector Forum (FSF) particularly to harmonize regulations and supervision methods, to strengthen information exchange, and to improve consumer protection.

These reform measures I have just outlined will establish a more robust financial system that will better protect the savings of ordinary depositors and investors and open up new opportunities for private enterprise to more rapidly grow their businesses.

Our efforts have also taken us to Congress where we have advocated passage of laws conducive to financial sector development. These include the elimination of DST on secondary trading of securities; the SPV Law; and the Asset Securitization Law.

Legislative agenda

We are prioritizing the enactment of Amendments to the BSP Charter that will provide for more effective bank supervision and better legal protection of our personnel. We are seeking the establishment of a central credit information bureau that will institutionalize the collection, consolidation, and distribution of credit information. We are supporting other legislative initiatives that will further bolster the capital market such as the PERA and RICA Bills as well as modernize our antiquated 90-year old bankruptcy resolution framework.

With all these efforts to create an efficient and modern financial system, the BSP has not lost sight of institutionalizing a social dimension in the system. The BSP has made it an equally important priority to broaden access of the poor to financial services.

One specific initiative is our flagship program on microfinance where we have put in considerable work in developing a supportive policy and regulatory environment. We have encouraged our banks to lend to the poor in a sustainable way. This has quickly borne fruit.

Today, our banks, especially rural banks, have an outstanding loan portfolio of more thank P3.2 billion dedicated to microfinance, benefiting over half a million very small entrepreneurs.

As the majority of the Monetary Board and I end our term, we would like to acknowledge the enlightened business community's assistance in our endeavor to help move forward the country's development objectives. The reforms are now moving in the right direction and steadily gaining critical mass but much more remains to be done.

More than anything else, we need to persevere in our cause.

I am satisfied that our exit will not end the reforms. The BSP as an organization is fully committed and up to the tasks at hand. With your steadfast support, there won't be any turning back.

Lesson in life

As we prepare to fade away and yield to the next team, if there is one thing I learned in life it is this: being an average student does not necessarily mean that you will not be successful.

Life teaches you that one's E.Q. is as important as one's I.Q. That being able to get people to work with you effectively is much more important than knowing all the answers.

Because of my having worked in 12 different countries with 12 different cultures, I have learned to adapt to the local environment. My transfer from private sector to public service was just another change in setting. As long as you know how to deal with good people, you can work effectively and make a difference.

I would like to thank my family—my brothers and sister, my son and daughter-in-law for their continuing support and especially my wife Mav who is my most ardent admirer, confidante, and spiritual guide. Without her encouragement and care, I would probably not be here with you today.

Thank you and a very good day to all.

(The author is Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. This article contains the speech of the author when the Management Association of the Philippines conferred on him the "Management Man of the Year" for 2004 award. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

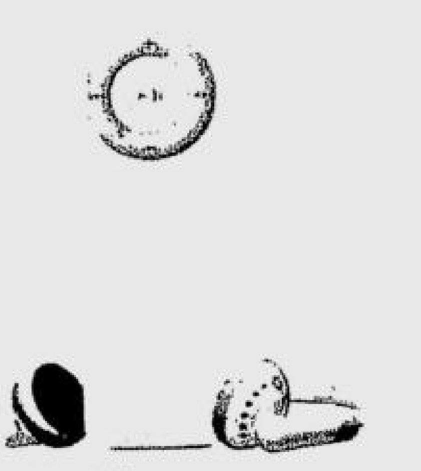
Apple introduces first iPod under ₱7,000

MACWORLD EXPO, SAN FRANCISCO—Apple recently introduced iPod shuffle, a breakthrough digital music player based on iPod's legendary shuffle feature which lets users experience their music in a million different ways. Smaller and lighter than a pack of gum, iPod shuffle comes with its own lanyard so it's ready to wear right out of the box. iPod shuffle works seamlessly with iTunes' innovative AutoFill feature which automatically selects songs from a user's music library to fill up iPod shuffle with just one click. iPod shuffle is the most affordable iPod ever and is available in two models: 512MB holding up to 120 songs for just P6,999 and 1GB holding up to 240 songs for just P9,999.

"iPod shuffle is smaller and lighter than a pack of gum and costs less than P7,000," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "With most flash-memory music players users must use tiny displays and complicated controls to find their music; with iPod shuffle you just relax and it serves up new combinations of your music every time you listen."

iPod shuffle is based on iPod's pioneering and widely-used shuffle feature, which randomly selects songs from the user's music library or playlists. In addition, iPod shuffle works seamlessly with iTunes and its innovative new patent-pending AutoFill feature, which automatically selects the perfect number of songs to fill iPod shuffle from a user's complete music library on their computer. And at any time, with a flip of a switch on the back of iPod shuffle, users can choose to listen to their music in order rather than shuffled, perfect for listening to a favorite new album.

Users can conveniently charge and transfer music from their Mac or PC by plugging iPod shuffle directly into a USB port. iPod shuffle doubles as a portable USB flash drive with up to 1GB of storage space to back up personal files and exchange them between computers.



iPOD Shuffle

iPod shuffle is the newest member of Apple's wildly popular iPod family for both Mac and PC which includes the fourth generation iPod, the iPod mini, the iPod U2 Special Edition and iPod photo. More than 10 million iPods have been sold since it was introduced, and it is the number one selling digital music player in the world.

The popularity of iPod has also created a booming accessory market, and iPod shuffle is being introduced with several optional accessories. In addition to the included lanyard, there is an optional armband that makes iPod shuffle perfect for many athletic activities. An optional sport case keeps iPod shuffle safely protected from outdoor elements with its clear case and neck strap. An optional dock serves as an elegant and convenient home base for syncing and charging iPod shuffle, and an optional USB power adapter easily charges iPod shuffle when it's away from the computer by simply plugging it into any electrical outlet. Users can extend the iPod shuffle battery life (up to 12 hours) with an optional battery pack that holds two AAA batteries and keeps the music playing for up to 20 additional hours.

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"We don't immediately say we can't do it"

By Marlet D. Salazar

MORE than two decades of service in a company speaks a lot about loyalty.

"This is my first and final company," proudly states LG Electronics Philippines' chief executive officer Jeff Hong.

Before joining the company, Hong received several job offers from other multinational corporations and conglomerates in Korea. In the end, Hong decided the harmonized culture of LG would fit in his principles. That culture, according to Hong is simply called "The LG Way" or simply "Great Company, Great People."

"When we get instructions from the management, we don't immediately say 'no, we can't do it,'" said Hong. "We first study whether we can implement them or not. Then we go back to our boss and tell them how we feel about it."

There never was a fear about failing within the company, according to Hong. Everything is doable. "If we are stuck with a feeling of fear or failure, then we cannot do anything," he says.

Although at one point in his life, Hong contemplated on resigning from the job. He decided to consult some of his friends and former schoolteachers. One of them advised him to reach the goal he has set and continue with the job.

Hong served as general manager of LG Electronics in Seoul from 1999 to 2003. He has been the president and CEO of LG Philippines since. He started with LG as a rank and file employee and worked his way up.

He graduated from the Hong-Ik University in Seoul, Korea, with a degree in Bachelor in Business Administration in 1984.

Two years after joining LG, Hong was assigned to sales. He has been assigned to other countries including India. Before taking over the post here he was assigned in Korea.

Hong gives himself three months to adjust with the environment and the employees. However, here in the Philippines it took him three more months because of cultural differences.

He looks forward to making LG a number one brand in the Philippines, and Hong hopes to accomplish it by 2007. To do this, the organization needs to focus and increase sales not only on the commodity-based products but also on products geared to the high-end market.

Hong aims to secure LG's three core capabilities which are product leadership, market leadership and people-centered leadership.

Although LG has been strong on the commodity or retail market, Hong wants to capture the share of the high-end market. With this comes new products applied with state-of-the-art technology. The likes of a refrigerator with a built-in television set, plasma TVs, hope to find its way to the homes of the more affluent ones.

It is with these types of products plus other innovations that Hong hopes to grab that market share.

But increasing the sales is not the only way to get and maintain that customer base. He also instills in employees the need for speed in the LG community.

"Customer needs and complaints must be addressed immediately," he says.

LG has two growth strategies which involve "fast innovation" and "fast growth" to which Hong wants to instill in the organization.

Hong is optimistic that this will be achieved within the period he has set "because we are giving them the value of the brand name LG. We want to make the consumers spend their money for value."

JEFF Hong

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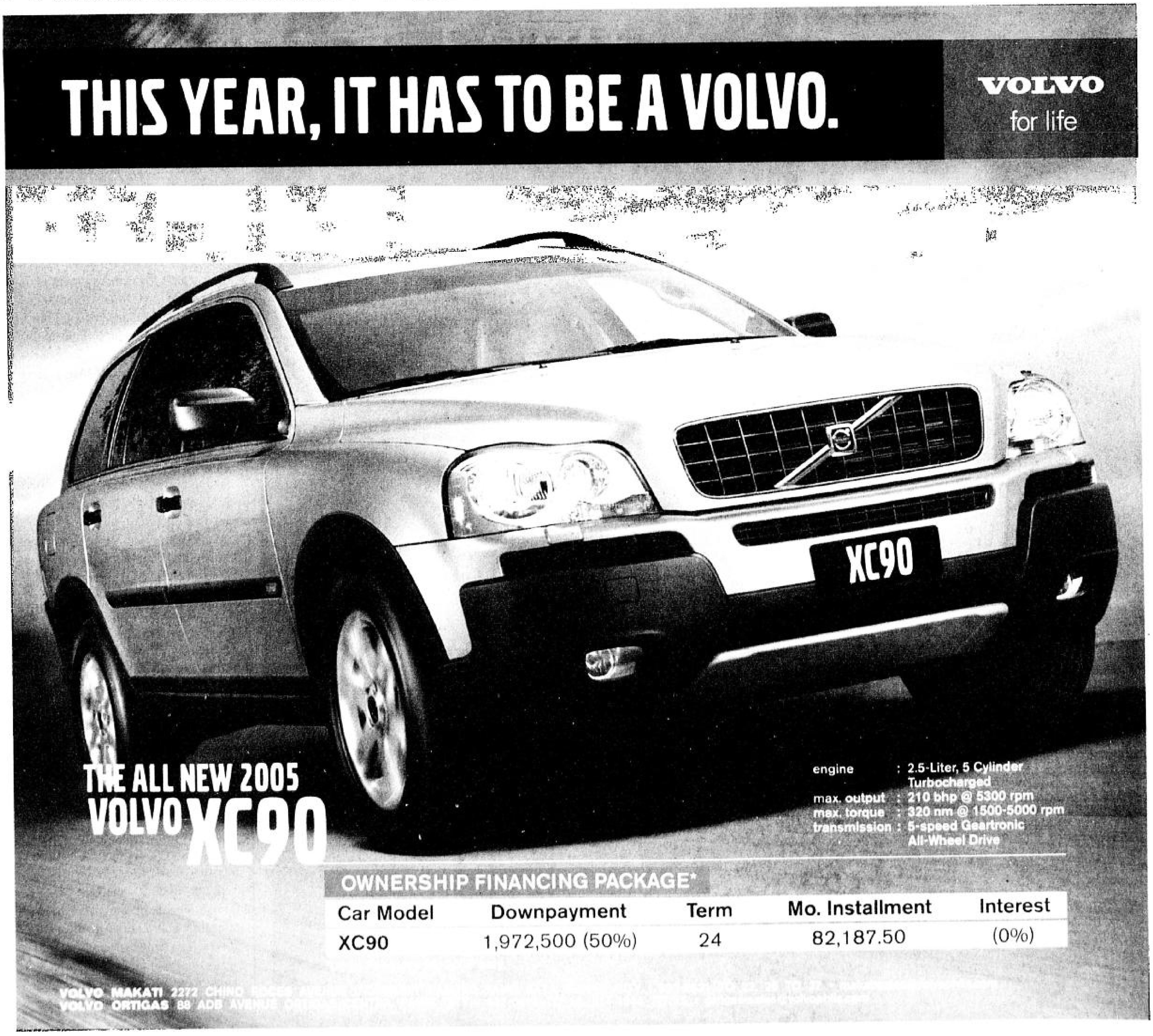

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Call centers booming, but sector faces issues

From page B8

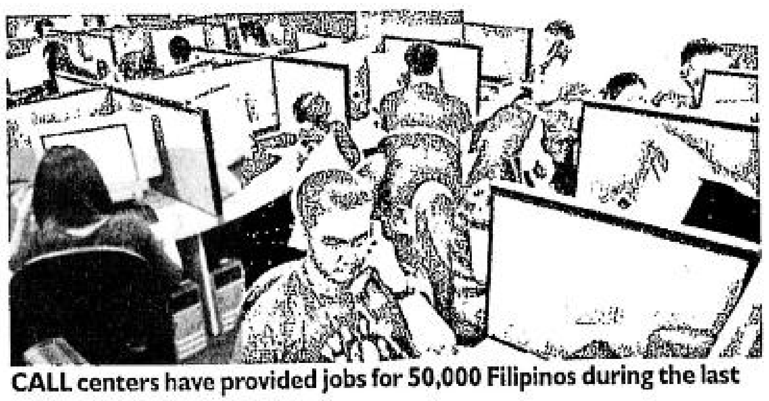
and a Client Portfolio Company of Amas Bank (Switzerland) Limited, a private bank wholly owned by The Hinduja Group. The fusion of these three cultures, Filipino, American and Indian, has provided a distinct advantage for C-Cubed to pool their strengths to further deliver world-class services.

Today, C-Cubed serves a big number of clients from the lucrative North American market, besides maintaining its local foothold. With an annual turnover of 20 to 30 percent in the last three years and more than 1,300 employees to date, the company makes a nice trophy for what the Philippine call center industry has come up to.

The call center industry is often called a "savior," doing what the electronics and semiconductors industry did to the economy in the tumultuous years of the 80s. During that time, the latter injected life into the hemorrhaging economy with its dollar revenues from electronics and semiconductor exports, which comprise about 70 percent of the country's total exports.

Meanwhile, the call center industry appears to be the only bright spot in the economic horizon today. In the last three years, it has pushed the growth of the services sector in the gross domestic product (GDP) pie to an annual average of 6.8 percent. During the same period, it has provided jobs to over 50,000 young Filipinos.

Its total revenues today reach $600 million, with half of it representing balance of trade surplus.


CALL centers have provided jobs for 50,000 Filipinos during the last three years.

The call center boom was preceded by the phenomenal expansion of the telecom sector. Liberalized in the early 90s, the sector represents the biggest leap by any industry, with total subscriber base for cellular services alone now about 25 million, all requiring fast and efficient telecom technology to reach each other and the rest of the connected world.

Once the telecom infrastructure was in place, ICT-related enterprises became attractive. Call centers are actually only a segment of a bigger world that is the business process outsourcing. It encompasses other disciplines like medical transcription, animation, engineering design and software development.

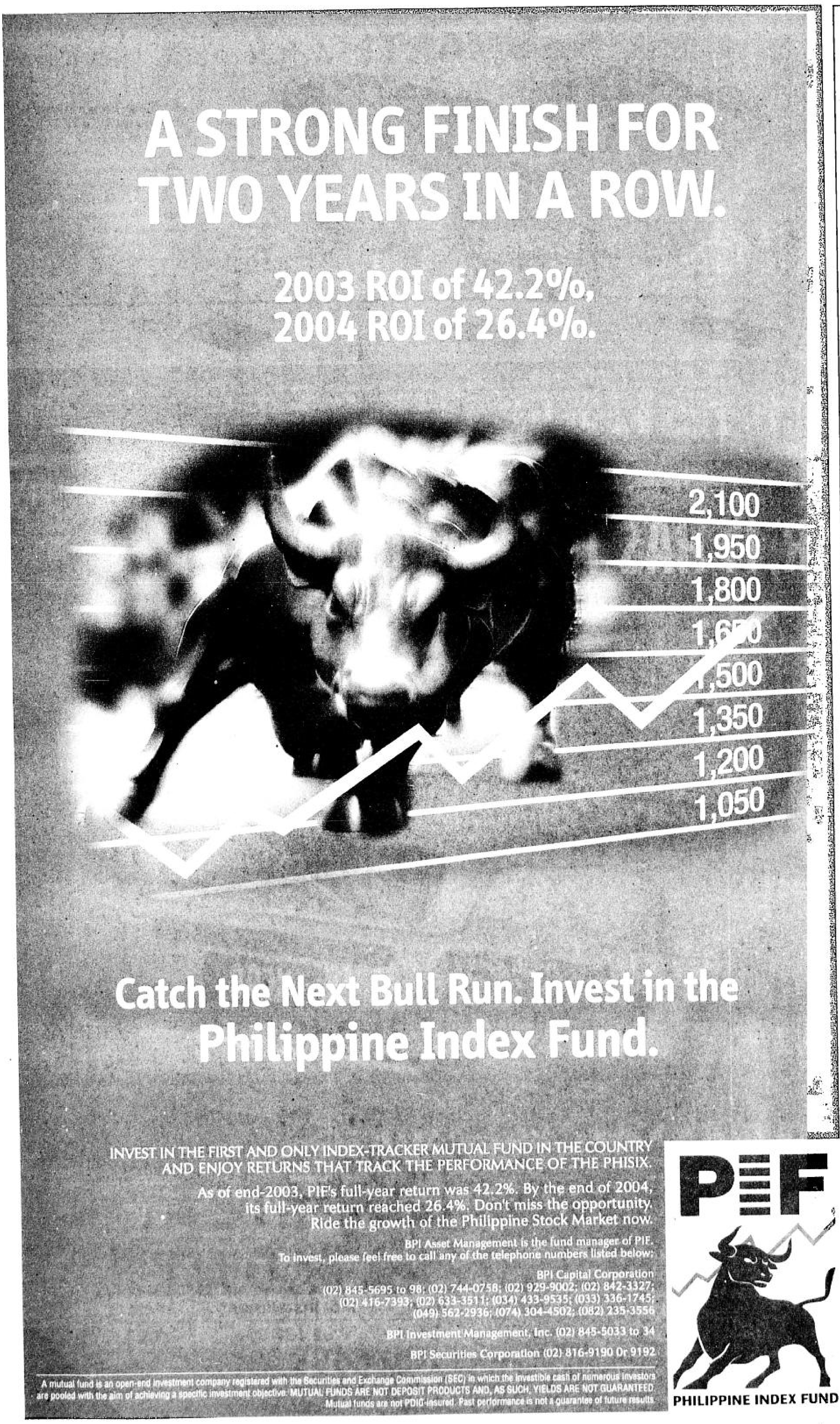
Suddenly, the Philippines became an ideal site for offshore contact services. A number of factors helped. First, the cost of trans-Pacific lines went down dramatically from $20,000 per month in 2001 to only $3,000 in 2003. Thus, North American companies came close to realizing about 40 to 50 percent savings in cost differentials.

Second, the country enjoys a labor advantage, with its workforce having basic facility in the English language, easy trainability and western orientation. Labor cost is also cheaper. In fact, compared with market leader India, the average cost for a call center agent is lower by seven percent in the Philippines, according to Hewitt Associates.

As of the moment, the pressure is not as intense as it's mainly about building facilities and hiring people for the yet growing demand. So call center managers and their agents can enjoy the opportunities and the huge earnings, about P35,000 monthly for a team leader managing 12 call center representatives, and the rate moves up fast.

This year, C-Cubed alone expects to reach a capacity of 1,300 seats from more than 800 in 2004. It is also anticipating higher revenues of over $20 million by yearend.

By 2008, Datamonitor forecasts that one in 15 agent positions serving US customers will be outsourced to a foreign market, up from one in 24 today. The Philippines stands a chance to capture these positions ahead of other global players. And that may all depend on how fast it is able to address its sustainability issues. To be there, it has to be dynamic as in the beginning.



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PHILIPPINE INDEX FUND

First Index-tracker Mutual Fund shows strong finish in 2004

Stock market sentiment remained bullish especially when it reached its highest close this year at 2,014 last January 28. Investors are taking positions this early in anticipation of better earnings in 2005 with the improvement in consumption and on expectations that government will maintain its firm resolve to improve tax collection and control the budget deficit. This positive sentiment augurs well for the country's first and only index-tracker mutual fund, the Philippine Index Fund or PIF which showed a strong finish in 2004 with a full-year net return of 26.4% versus the average return of equity mutual funds of 15.21% for the same period. PIF ended the year 2004 with PhP413Mn in net asset value. This superior performance is the second in a row as PIF previously registered a 42.2% return by end of 2003 compared to the 12.9%-40.65% of other actively managed and competitor equity mutual funds.

PIF is an index-tracker mutual fund which investment objective is to provide investment returns that track the performance of the Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index (PHISIX). Its investment portfolio consists of all the 33 issues that comprise the PHISIX in exactly the same weightings as in the index. It is currently the only mutual fund in the country which was granted a special approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission to be exempted from the 10% diversification limit imposed on local mutual funds.

PIF which was incorporated on December 2002 and launched in September 2003 immediately gained popularity among retail stock investors because of the benefits of convenience and affordability it offered to them. For a minimum initial investment of PhP50,000 during the initial offer period, investors can already ride the full upside potential of the entire stock market without having to pick individual stocks and bet which one will provide the highest return. With PIF, investors earn returns equivalent to that of the market. PIF currently stands as the largest equity mutual fund with 31% share of the pure equity fund market.

With market analysts seeing bullish signals as the PHISIX hits new highs, PIF aims to also start 2005 with a bang especially as a target level of around 2100 is projected for the year. So don't get left behind, CATCH THE NEXT BULL RUN!

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Starting early - I

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

WHEN I was in my mid-twenties, my assistant gave me a book for my birthday. The book had nothing in it—the pages were blank.

In the note that accompanied this gift, my assistant offered some wonderful advice. The gift of her message was this: "John, settle who you are and what you believe in, and then fill these pages up."

In other words, she was encouraging me to develop my philosophy of life early—and to put it on paper so I would never forget it.

What was really important to me? What was I willing to die for? What was non-negotiable and what was optional in my career and my relationships? The sooner I settled all this, the better off I would be.

As my assistant understood, there is tremendous value in starting early—when it comes to determining your overall vision and attitude about life, as well as in many other areas. When you're young, it's hard to imagine how critical this is—you think you have your whole life ahead of you to figure everything out.

Maybe so, but all things being equal, a person who gets out of the block quickly has infinitely more potential for success than someone who doesn't.

When I was 40, I put together a list of 10 powerful, practical things every young leader should do early in life by the time he or she turns 40, at the latest. We've already discussed one of them: Develop your philosophy of life. In this issue of "Leadership Wired," I'll cover four more, and in the next issue I'll complete the list. Here we go:

Know yourself

This isn't some philosophical mystery; it's actually quite simple. Knowing yourself means being acutely aware of your strengths and weaknesses. It means knowing what you do well and what you don't do so well. That way you can work in your strength zone, where your most significant opportunity for growth and success lies, as opposed to focusing on your weak zone, where all you'll find is frustration and stagnation.

Settle your family life.

Identify the issues that are affecting your family and figure out how to deal with them. Marriage always takes work, but it's pretty sad when two 40-year-olds are still struggling with the same problems they had when they got married 18 years ago. You may not resolve every issue entirely; you and your spouse may have to agree to disagree on some items. The key is to be comfortable with your differences so you can move forward together.

Determine your priorities.

By the time you hit 40, you should have your priorities set. You should know how you want to spend your time and to what you want to devote your life. The following statement, which I've carried in my briefcase for years, highlights the importance of this:

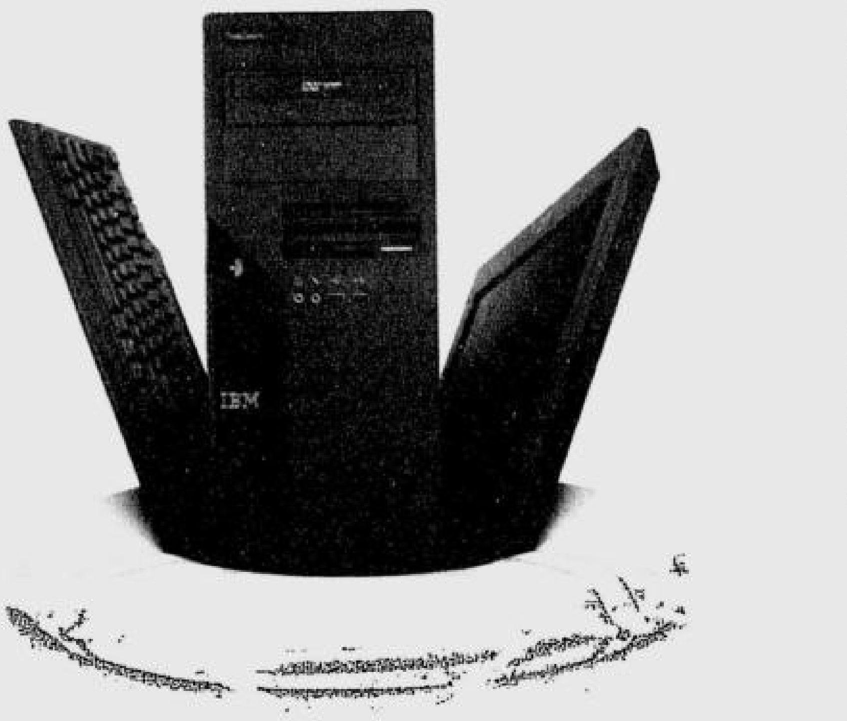
"He who seeks one thing, may hope to achieve it before life is done. But he who seeks all things wherever he goes Must reap around him in whatever he sows A harvest of barren regret."

Get physically fit.

Early in life, people give up their health to gain wealth; later in their life, they give up their wealth to regain their health. That's how it often works, but it doesn't have to be that way. I'm not saying you have to be able to run a marathon. Just exercise and get yourself in decent shape. Don't put it off until later; start today. Trust me—whatever sacrifice this requires will pay dividends later.

You won't get these issues resolved overnight—they take time, thought, and in some cases, a great deal of sweat. But don't let the complexity of the task discourage you from starting the process. Remember, the sooner you settle all this, the better off you'll be.

Feedback at slvguru@pldtDSL.net



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Call centers booming, but sector faces issues

DESPITE the rosy future of the Philippine call center industry, given that outsourced services today reflects only a small fraction of the huge American market, the government needs to sufficiently address the question of sustainability.

Jose Xavier "Eckie" Gonzales, chief executive officer of the Customer Contact Center Inc. C-Cubed, said an enhanced framework on education and training must be in place. He said though the Philippine tertiary schools churn out 450,000 graduates annually, not all applicants meet the qualifications of the call center industry.

"At C-Cubed, we hire only one out of 50 applicants. The industry average is anywhere from 2 to 5 percent," he said.

C-Cubed is the first Philippine call center with an integrated ISO 9001:2000 and BS7799 certification.

Lack of skills

The reason for the low take-up is the lack of off-the-shelf skills that the industry requires. This is bolstered by a recent survey of Gartner, an ICT research firm, that ranked the Philippines 12th in people's skills and availability behind India, China, Malaysia, the Czech Republic and Singapore.

Hence, to be competitive, the country must do something in the education and training of its talent pool.

"This can be addressed by a change in the school curriculum or outreach programs like those between ePLDT and FEU, People Support and DTI with UE, and Teledevelopment with La Salle," Gonzales said.

All this should help strengthen the talent pool and make them available when the industry expands from its current size of 40,000 seats to projected growths in the future.

Economic benchmarking

There is also the economic benchmarking to consider. Despite its increasing role, the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry, along with the call centers, does not have a definitive presence in the national accounting framework. It is lost in the travel, communications, financial services, computer information and other services sub-categories of the national accounts.

"Service export grew by 23 percent between the last quarter of 2003 and the first quarter of 2004 and by 28 percent between the first and the third quarters of the year, but we don't know how much of this growth is coming from the call centers," Gonzales stated.

Employment data is also insufficient because call centers are under the "miscellaneous business previously undefined" category, which gets a smaller sampling of labor statistics.

The remedy should come by way of a separate ICT category for both the export receipts and the employment statistics. This way, lawmakers and economic regulators will have a basis for policy making as regards the BPO and call center industry.

Infrastructure

Another area is infrastructure, especially power. The call center industry, according to Gonzales, is "all about 24/7 reliability." Indeed there is cause for alarm because power supply can only be sufficient until 2007. If no new generating units are put in place by then, the Philippines would disappear from the global industry map no matter how well placed its telecom and manpower infrastructures are.

Along with this is the need for an efficient mass transit system or train network. This will help expand the daytime carrying capacity of Metro Manila from 12 million to 20 million to include people coming from as far as Calamba in the south and Clark in the north. With sufficient connectivity, Metro Manila will not have to worry where to draw call center manpower for its maximum of up to half a million seats.

In 2003, C-Cubed the company was acquired by an investor group led by Gonzales. The new partners are Universal Vision Corp. (UVC), a joint venture between Ludwell Denny Associates

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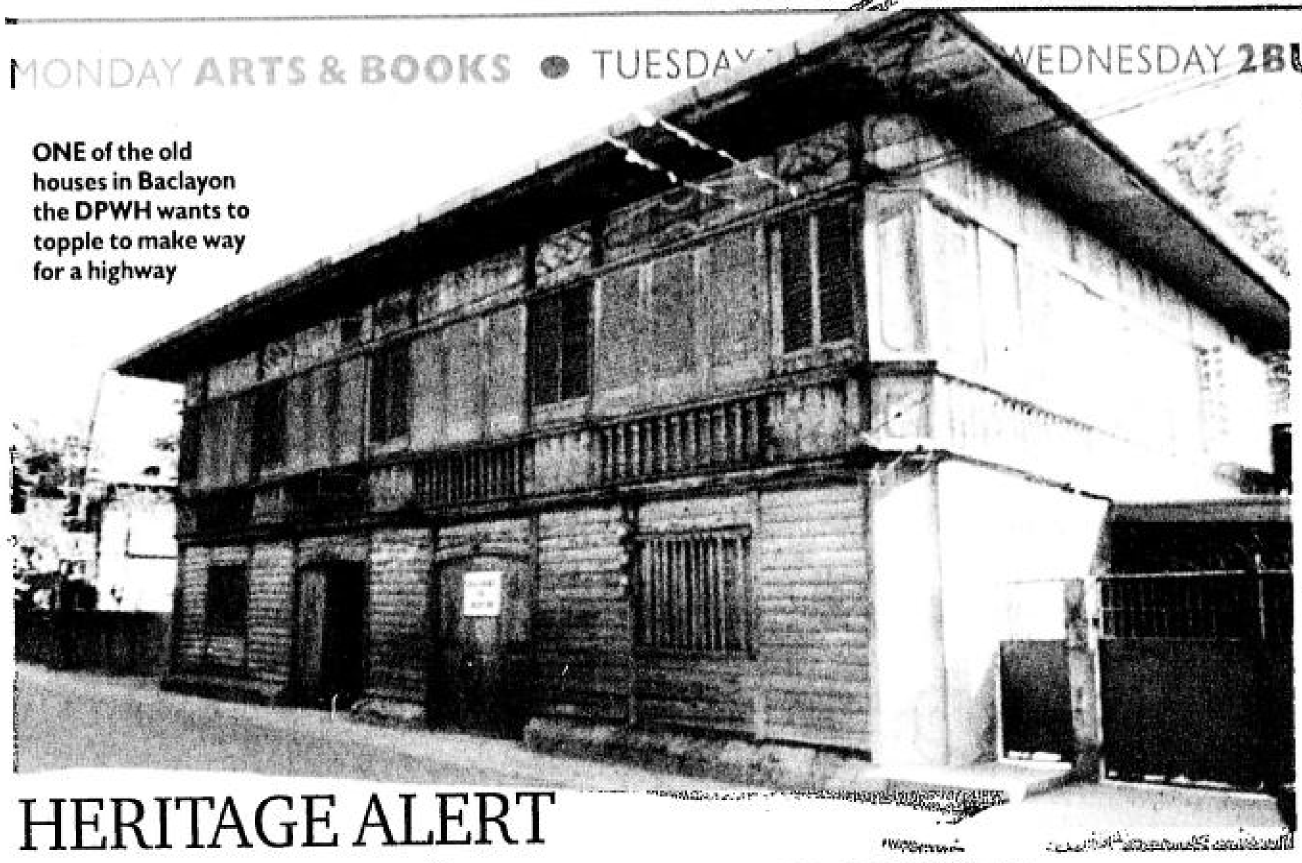
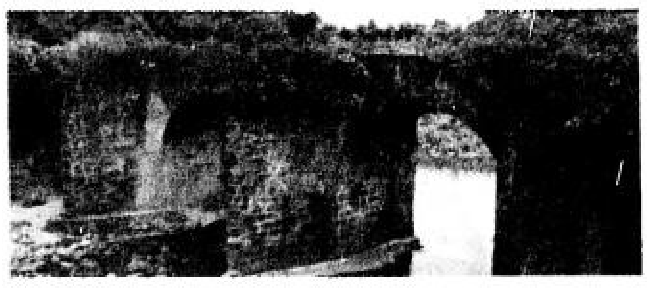
DUNKIN' DONUTS P35 lang! LOVE BITES



ONE of the old houses in Baclayon the DPWH wants to topple to make way for a highway

Vigilantes decry misguided constructions in Bohol, Tayabas and Taal



READERS have reacted violently against the plan to erect a restaurant on top of Malagonlong Bridge in Tayabas.

HERITAGE ALERT

Graft-prone DPWH destroying Bohol heritage

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

HERITAGE vigilantes from Baclayon (Bohol) send a red-flag SOS that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is bent on demolishing a row of heritage houses to widen the highway that cuts through the town center and passes perilously close to historic Baclayon Church.

This is another episode in the long history of DPWH's disregard of Bohol heritage. They simply refuse to learn their lesson.

In the late 1980s, DPWH built Loboc Bridge, a massive concrete hulk crossing the pristine Loboc River. It would bring progress to sleepy Loboc town, they said.

DPWH got to build a span crossing three-quarters of the river's width and had to make an abrupt stop in mid-air because there was no room for the bridge to go down on the opposite bank without colliding into historic Loboc Church.

Public outcry mobilized the Diocese of Tagbilaran, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the National Historical Institute (NHI) and the National Museum (NM).

At the inquiry conducted by NCCA, DPWH's lame answers revealed a blissful lack of coordination. Demolition was out of the question because of threatened damage to Loboc Church from vibrations, so the incomplete bridge is there to stay providing no progress at all to the town.

Today, the Loboc River cruise is one of Bohol's most popular attractions

GRAFT/ C4

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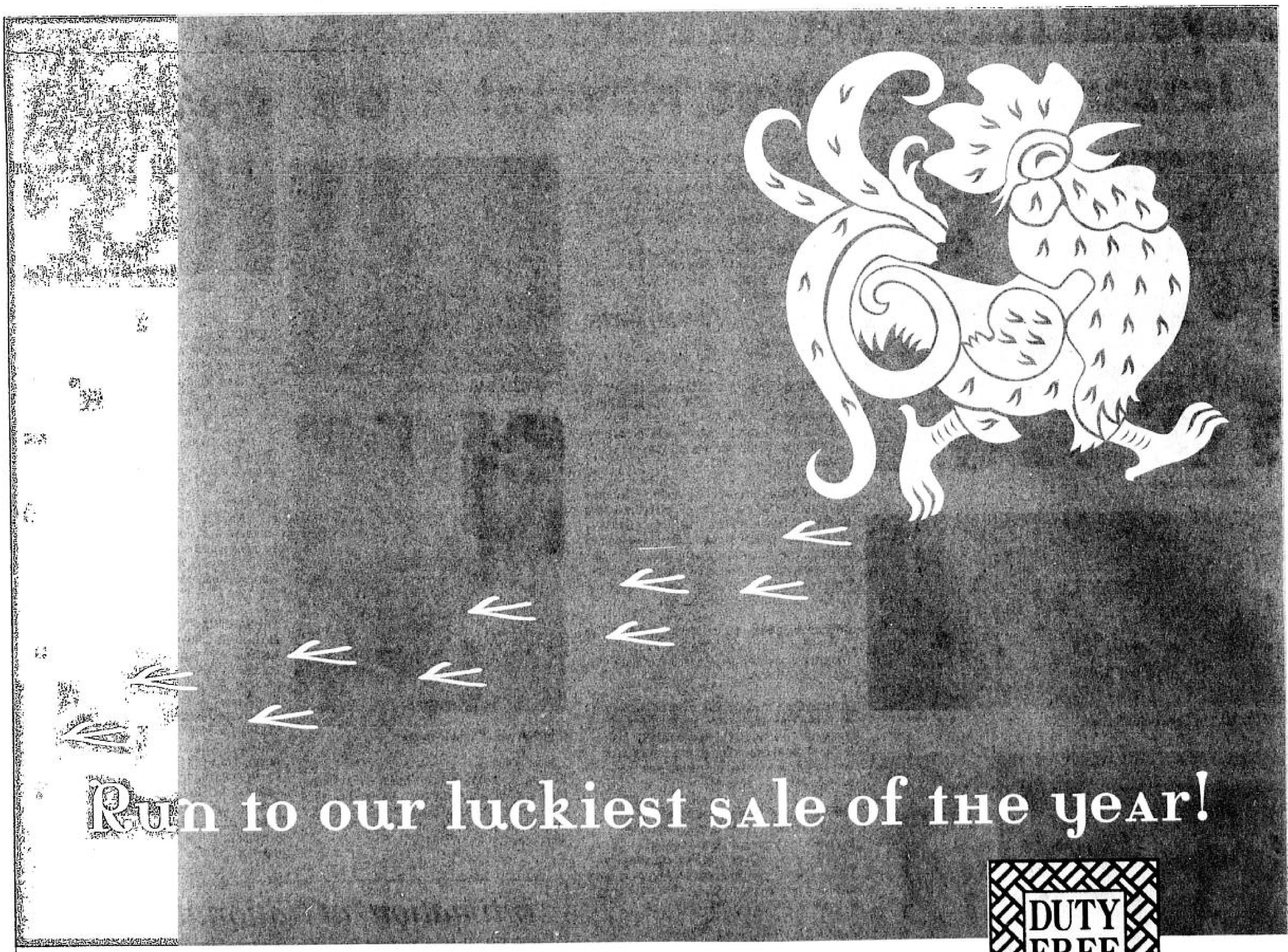

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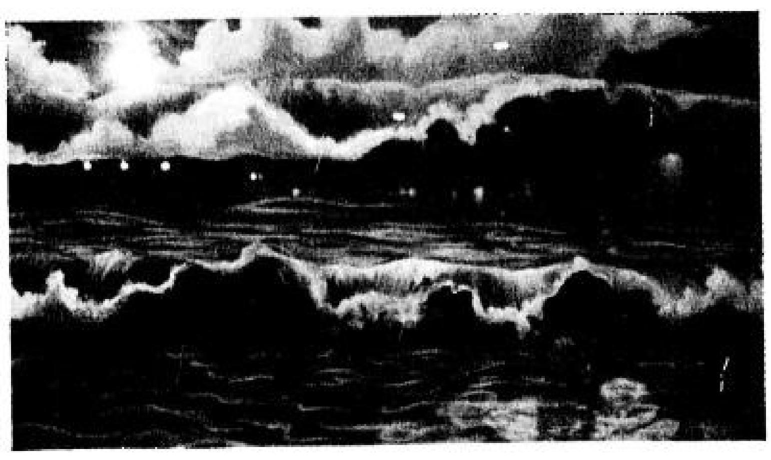
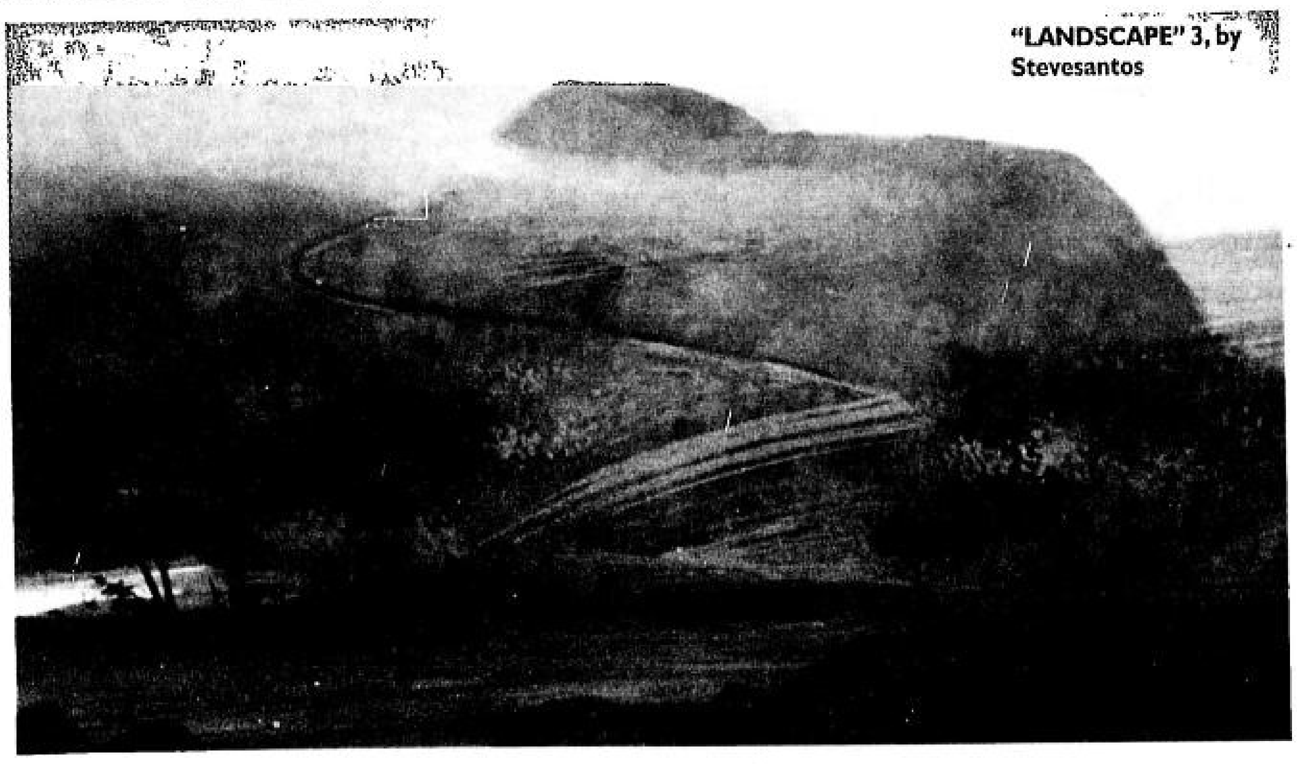

"SEASCAPE," by Jill Raymundo PHOTO: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN


"LANDSCAPE" 3, by Stevesantos

The power of the monochrome

By Constantino C. Tejero

IT USED to be that only a few painters were daring enough to use only one color in their works. It's like going to war armed only with a Swiss knife.

Now it is becoming a trend, as if our artists were challenging one another who could push the monochrome farther to the abyss of dullness and get away with it.

In recent exhibits, Ferdinand Montemayor and Fernando Escora used only red. In two successive exhibits, Erwin Leaño used brown and slate-green, respectively.

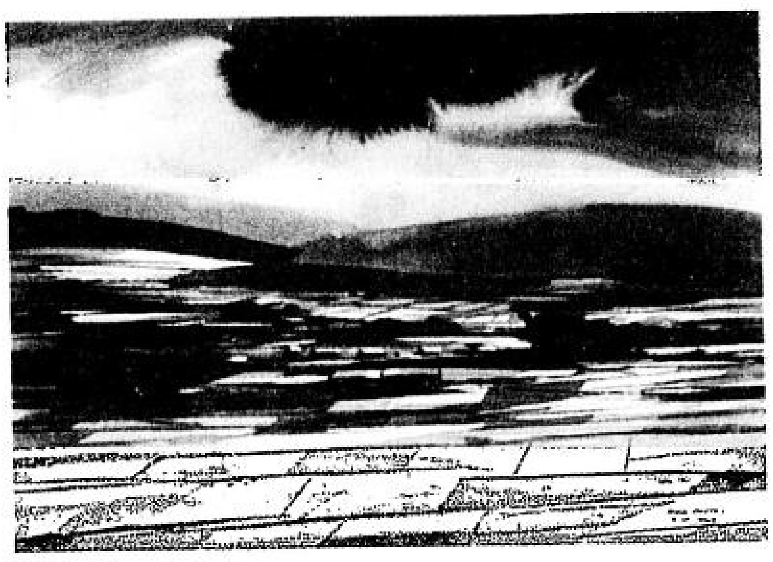
Older artists such as Gus Albor, Lao Lianben, Romulo Olazo, Egai Fernandez, Alan Rivera and Red Mansueto have been thriving on the monochrome for years, fluctuating between incandescent hues and muted tones.

Even a venerable artist like Malang Santos, the herald of the rainbow, held an exhibit of monochromatic works late last year, surprising his fans. (See a sampling in his exhibit "7+7," until Feb. 13 in Crucible Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.)

Much earlier, of course, Fernando Zobel produced a series of monochromatic paintings that appeared like stroboscopic photographs.

Many of these artists' use of monochrome, in fact, does give the effect of sepia or black-and-white photography, as in Leaño's close-ups of body parts, which appear like blown-up photos, or Olazo's diaphanous abstraction, which seems like X-ray photography.

Sustaining that affinity and connection were two recent exhibits which offered photo-realist pieces in shades of gray or another neutral grayish color.

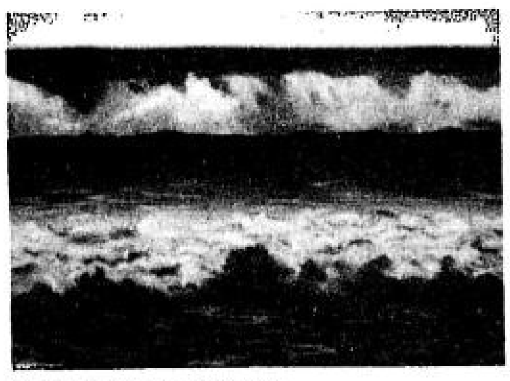

"LANDSCAPE" 11, by Stevesantos

Mood and perspective

The first was Stevesantos' "Landscapes," 25 pieces in Japanese ink and watercolor on paper, in West Gallery at the Artwalk.

Formerly a proponent of Magical Realism à-la Wyeth, the artist still creates images characterized by sharp-focus detail but now in panoramic views instead of close-ups. Here he is clearly concentrating on mood and perspective.

His visions of earth and sky alternate between serenity and menace: still trees, calm field, neat grassland, black clouds, a tornado brewing on the horizon, a thunderstorm breaking in the sky.


"WAVES," by Raymundo

By rendering these sweeping vistas in monochrome, Stevesantos has created imagery that still looks realist, maybe romantic in tone, but not sentimentalized.

The same can be said of Jill Raymundo's seascapes, in colored charcoal on paper, in "New Works" at Le Soufflé, 2/F, Wynsum Corporate Plaza, Ruby Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Included in the exhibit were several portrayals of human figures entangled or in solitude, but it was particularly the grayish seascapes that absorbed the viewer. (One golden seascape, postcard-pretty, didn't look as interesting.)

While realist in detail, they're near impressionistic in the treatment of lucent waves, lightening horizon and darkening shoreline, but for the fact that they are, implausibly, devoid of warm color. Though rendered in muted tone, they still manage to convey energy and movement, in the currents of air and water.

These and Stevesantos' landscapes are really depictions of the forces of nature, all in gray. In both works, the pervading air is one of melancholy.

Uses and distinction

It's what's called grisaille, when the painting is done in gray monotone. The technique is used for underpainting or sketches, as in Rubens' works. In the Renaissance, painters used it to imitate the effects of sculpture.

The works of Stevesantos and Raymundo, though, are not strictly monochromatic. While the pictorial field is generally slate, half of his brooding landscapes and most of her reflective seascapes are accentuated or highlighted in certain areas by blue-green, brown or some such dull color.

When chromatic colors are used for monochrome, it is camaieu, distinct from the achromatic grisaille. The technique involves several shades of a single color, as in the works of Olazo, Mansueto and Montemayor.

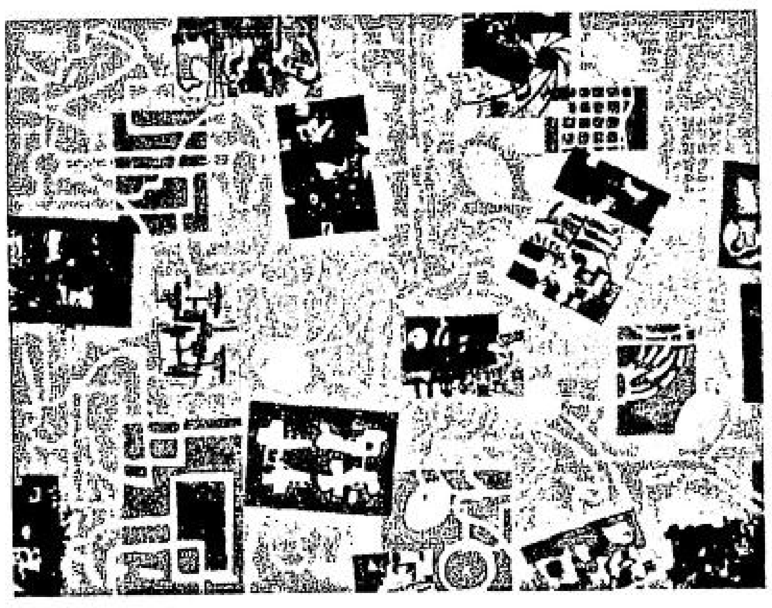
What then impels painters to use monochrome in their works?

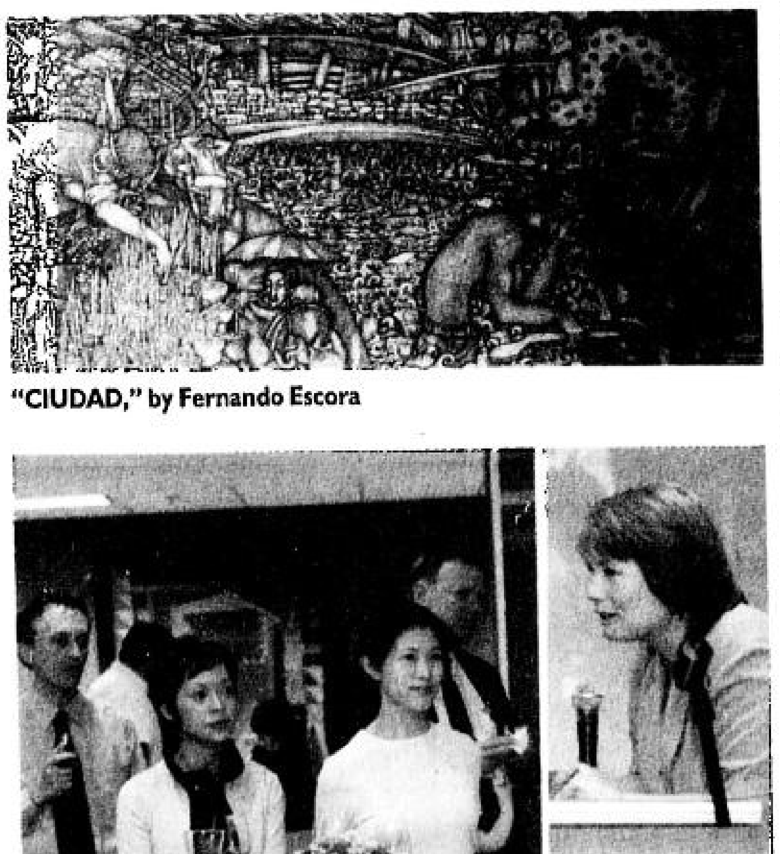
An analogy with Ingmar Bergman's early black-and-white films vis-à-vis his late color films may be useful. Though most of these were shot by one man, cinematographer Sven Nykvist, one can see that the early films possess a naked power in atmosphere and composition that the late films do not have.

Using a single color naturally gives emphasis or concentration on a subject, free from the distraction of the prism. And there are times when a particular theme or emotion may be best expressed in a single immaculate tone.

Reyes at Ricco-Renzo, Escora at West, Alcazaren at Mag:Net, Naval at Astra

VISUAL ARTS


"E," by Juan Alcazaren


"CIUDAD," by Fernando Escora

FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN artist Maria Cruz compiles different versions of Shangri-La in "The Shangri-La Collective." A joint initiative by the Australian Embassy and Ateneo Art Gallery, the video installation exhibit curated by Norberto Roldan is opened by Australian Ambassador Ruth Pearce (right) at the Australia Center.

JEMINA Reyes mounts her eighth solo exhibit, "Springshift," on Feb. 9-March 7 at Ricco-Renzo Galleries, G/F LRI Plaza, Bel-Air II, Makati. The collection of works was inspired by the surroundings of Santa Barbara. Call 8982542/ 43/ 45.

WEST Gallery features Fernando Escora's "Pagtanaw" on Feb. 10-22 at Megamall A. Escora has always delved on what strikes him in his immediate environment. In this exhibit, his scope is wider and his message speaks to just about anyone. Call 6341284.

MAG:NET Gallery presents Juan Alcazaren's "E" on Feb. 8-28 at the Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St., Makati. In "E," the artist translates the three-dimensional character of his previous site-specific installations into two-dimensional images. Call 8177895.

GALERIE Astra presents Poch Naval's "The Tinder Box and Other Would-Be Things" on Feb. 10-23 at the 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati. The artist uses the tinderbox as an analogy for the imagination which, when given a spark of stimulation easily goes into spontaneous combustion that is both violent and beautiful. Call 8903988/ 7243032/ 7269015.

CRUCIBLE Gallery mounts Malang Santos' "7 + 7" until Feb. 13 at the Artwalk, L/4, Megamall A. The artist presents 7 pieces on canvas and 7 on paper. Call 6356061.

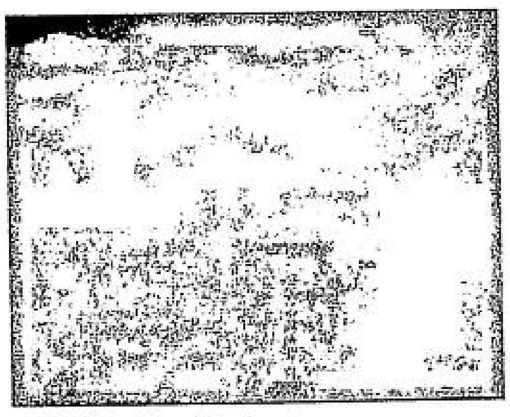
ALAN SyCip's latest paintings will be featured at Ayala Museum (Makati Ave. and De la Rosa St., Greenbelt Park, Ayala Center) on Feb. 10-March 2. The show, "Fierce Nature," is a collection of landscapes, seascapes and nature scenes in acrylic. Call 7577117 to 21.

THE UP Baguio-Galerya Kordilyera will hold Rudy Furuya's "A Sense of Baguio through Einosuke Rudy Furuya's Eyes" on Feb. 11-March 12 at University of the Philippines, Baguio City. Furuya offers a traveler's collage of impressions and images of a childhood place he has returned to to explore. Call (074) 4424708.

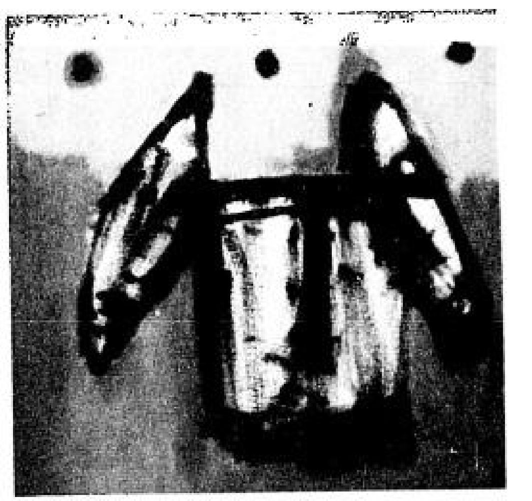
ALONA GALERIA presents "Bagong Sigla" on Feb. 12-26 at 102 Main Avenue, Cubao, QC. The exhibit features the works of Angono-based artists Felix Amonclo and Ovidio Espiritu Jr. Call 9129204.

ANVIL Publishing Inc. and Art Elements Asian Gallery recently launched "Food for Thought: A Two-Man Exhibit of Painting and Sketches on Food" by Egay Fernandez and Gene Gonzalez. All of Gonzalez's books are available at National Book Store and PowerBooks.

THE LOPEZ Memorial Museum will hold an artist-guided tour with Brenda Fajardo on Feb. 8, 2-4 p.m., at the G/F, Benpres Building, Exchange Road and Meralco Avenue, Pasig City. The tour is part of the ongoing exhibition "A Rough Sketch: Initial Musings," which runs until July. Reservation necessary. Call 6312417.


"WATER's Edge," by Jemina

JEMINA with "Small Wonder"


"TINDERBOX," by Poch Naval

ANNALI Garcia will hold her first workshop on artwork restoration and conservation on Feb. 10-11 at Ricco-Renzo Galleries and Bistro, LRI Business Plaza, Nicanor Garcia St., Makati. Aside from presenting a theoretical background on art restoration and its importance in the Asian art scene, Garcia will also give pointers on approaches in restoration and tips on how to handle solvents, pigments and other chemicals used in the trade. Call 8982542/ 43/ 45.

LAO Lianben's "Figures" at UP Vargas Museum is the first public viewing of a complete series of figurative works done from 2003 to 2004. A lone standing figure is the subject of 12 paintings on canvas rendered in acrylic, modeling paste, and some with paper collage elements. On view until Feb. 27 .

THE WAHANA Project opens on Feb. 12, 6 p.m., at The Edge Gallery of the UP Vargas Museum. National Artist Napoleon V. Abueva is the guest of honor. The Wahana Project is an artist collective initiated by a group of contemporary artists from Singapore. Since 1999, the group has mounted collaborative exhibitions with artists from Malaysia and Indonesia.
Featured artists are: Ahmad Abu Bakar, Erzan Adam, Mohamad Suhirman Sulaiman, Mohamad Fadzel Abdul Karim, Mohamad Razali Mahat, Salleh Japar, Siti Annazia Hamsani and Suhaimi Sukiyar. Joining them are Philippine artists Soler Santos, Pardo de Leon, Lexyglus Calip, Maria Cristina Valdezco, Eugene Jarque, and Junjun Sta. Ana. Call 9281927 or 9205301.

'Intimation' at National Museum

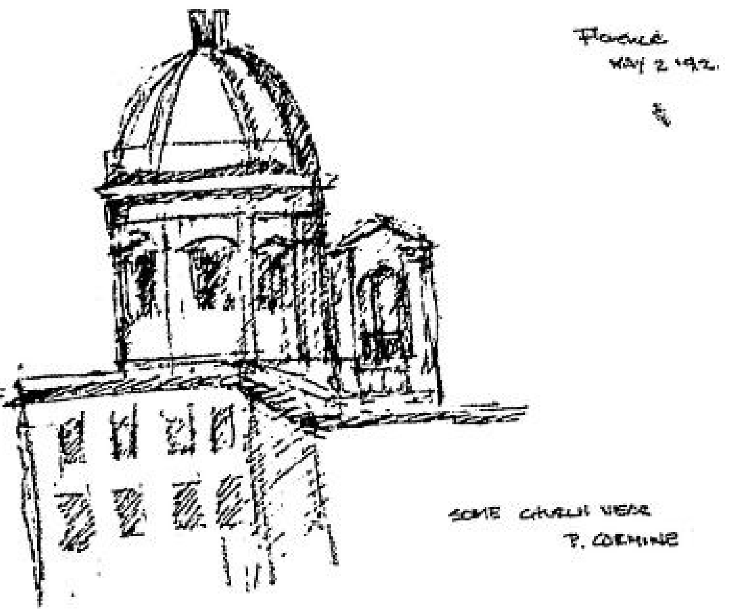
THE NATIONAL Museum invites the public to view the exhibition "Intimation: Compromises of Self in Philippine Art" at the 4/F of Museum of the Filipino People, along Finance Road, Manila.

The exhibition probes how the concept of self is interpreted in culture and translates into such notions as identity, nationalism and patrimony. It mingles art pieces such as those of José Rizal, Juan Luna, Victorio Edades and José Joya with cultural material like botanical specimens named after places, archaeological artifacts and a diorama of Batanes.

The project seeks to redefine the history of Philippine art in the context of a broader creative culture, which the previous exhibition "Influx: Transpositions in Philippine Modernism" had sought to initiate.

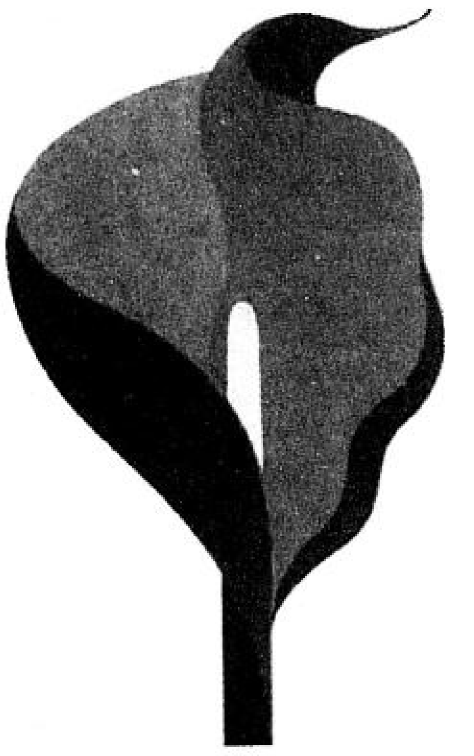
"Influx" and "Intimation" form parts of a series of initiatives that clarifies the role of the collection in Philippine art history and prepares the public for the opening of National Art Gallery.

The exhibition can be viewed Wednesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., until Feb. 20.



BY DAN Lichauco

Japanese posters at Shangri-La Plaza, Lichauco at Avellana

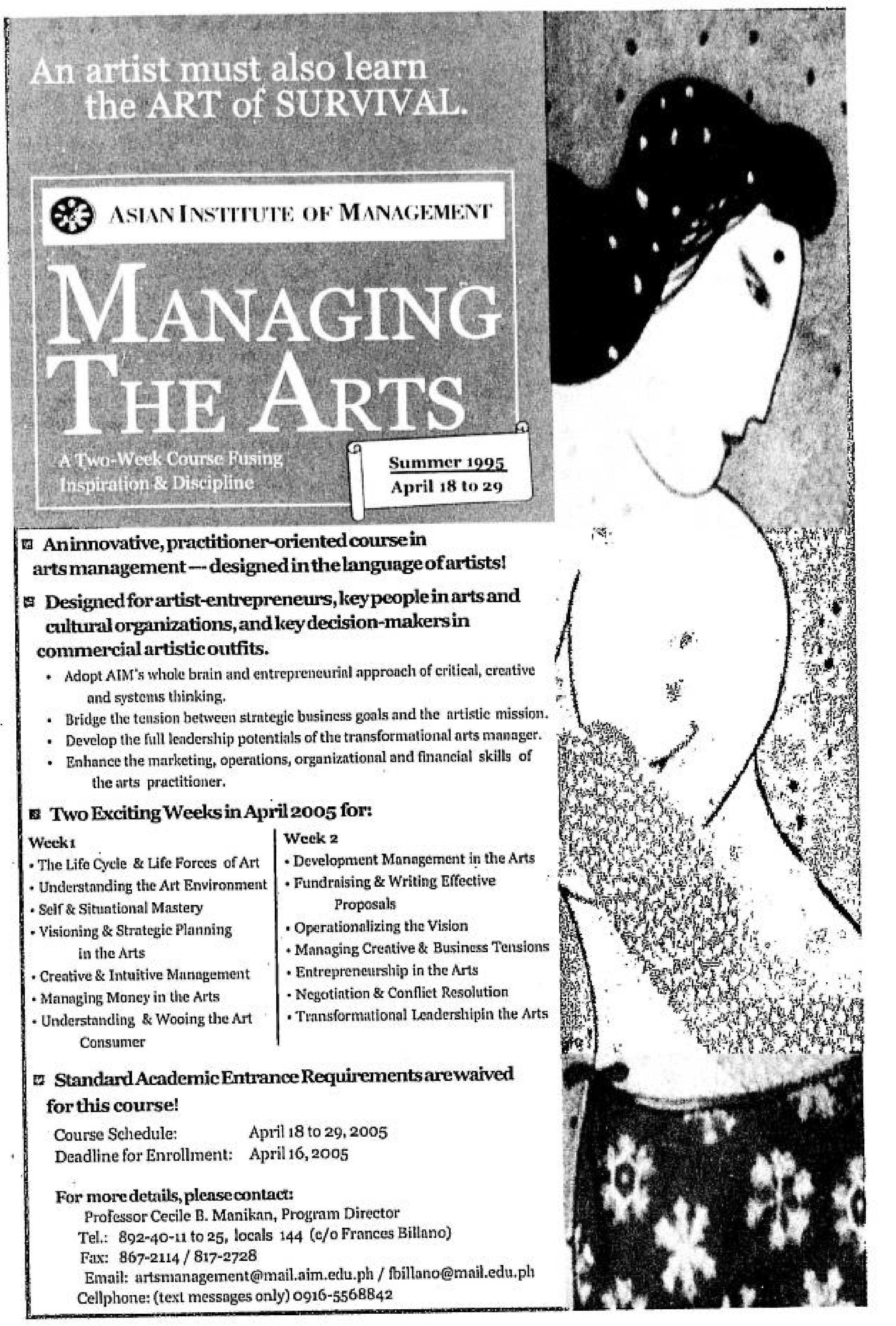


BY RYOHEI Kojima

THE JAPAN Foundation Manila features "Discover Japan through Contemporary Posters" on Feb. 11-26 at the 4/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall (Edsa and Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong). The touring exhibit includes 75 poster works of modern, cutting-edge Japanese graphic designers. Call 8116155 to 58.

Meanwhile, the Avellana Gallery (A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., between Edsa Extension and Libertad St. opposite Gideon Academy, Pasay City) will open today the exhibit of drawings by architect-designer Dan Lichauco. His furniture and lighting fixture designs will also be the inaugural presentation of the new A-11 Design Gallery.

The show will have a breakfast opening at 9:30 a.m. Call 8338357, 8328365.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[1] Walzem, R.L., C.J. Dillard, and J.B. German. Crit. Rev. Food & Sci & Nutr. 42:353, 2002.
[2] [illegible] A. Cancer Res 1994;14(6):1909-1975.

[illegible]

Graft-prone DPWH destroying Bohol heritage

DESPITE the protected status of St. Martin Basilica in Taal (Batangas) by the National Historical Institute, an unauthorized adoration chapel was built in one of the church courtyards that NHI now demands to be demolished.

From page C1

where guides point out the bridge as a glaring DPWH blunder.

Last year, DPWH did it again. They insisted on constructing a highway over a series of exceptional, well-preserved stone bridges along the provincial road originally built during the Spanish colonial period. They consulted the community before finalizing the highway design, but ignored all suggestions to save the bridges.

Regardless of the fact that few heritage bridges of the quality found in Bohol remain in the country, DPWH emphatically stated once again that the community stand to protect the bridges stood in the way of progress.

Progress? I cannot imagine anyone in this country to be anti-progress.

The question to ask is, What good is progress at the cost of eliminating Filipino cultural identity?

NCCA and NM intervened, but DPWH refused highway rerouting to save the bridges. A poor compromise was crafted to construct mini-flyovers over the stone bridges, which saved them from destruction but removed them from public view by effectively burying them in concrete.

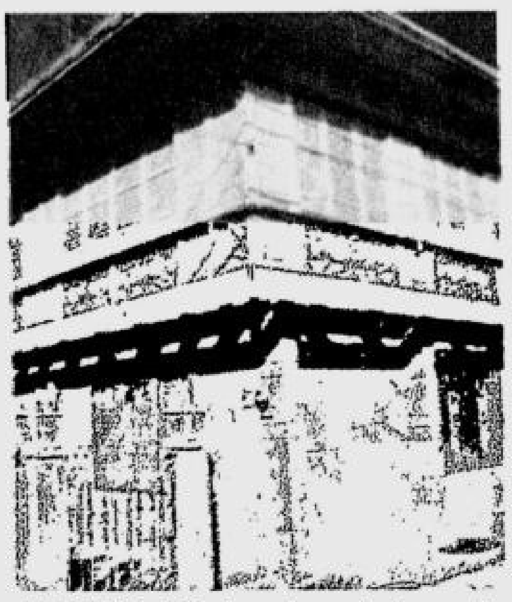
The Baclayon threat shows that DPWH will not give up. Now it insists on running a coastal highway through the center of the town that wipes out a row of heritage houses before it skirts the foot of historic Baclayon Church.

Imagine vehicle vibrations loosening up the fragile stones of the structure. DPWH accuses heritage vigilantes in Baclayon of being "anti-progress."

In its rush to bury Bohol in concrete, DPWH will eventually obliterate environment and heritage in Bohol, one of the few provinces in the country that has carefully built upon its environment and culture to become a top tourism destination.

DPWH will wipe out heritage towns to give Bohol good roads, so in the end where will the roads lead to? What is the progress there?

Vigilante response



ANOTHER old Baclayon house in danger of the DPWH's wrecking crew

The response to last week's call for Filipinos to be more watchful of our patrimony has elicited reports from heritage vigilantes all over the country who are actively participating in the preservation of our culture.

Among the letters received, one stands out. A young graduate, who has just completed a Spanish government study grant, writes of her stay in Spain: "I wanted people from all over the world to know my country and [to] discover it. I wanted them to know where I come from because my country is my identity."

She continues: "...this trip is long over, yet what it taught [me] still remains. I continue to yearn for [the] opportunity to help in preserving Philippine culture. I also want people ... not to make the same mistake I made. I don't want them to travel abroad and leave the country without Filipino pride. I want them to know the importance of being proud and happy to be a Filipino."

No to resto

The most violent reaction came from heritage vigilantes opposing the construction of a restaurant on top of Tayabas' Malagonlong Bridge, built out of stone during the Spanish colonial era.

The respondents' consensus was to build a restaurant a respectable distance that provided a view of the heritage bridge, but all concurred that absolutely no construction of any sort on top of the bridge should be allowed. They wanted the bridge protected from structural damage, deterioration, and the threat of fire from cooking equipment.

Many readers remember that the case filed by the Heritage Conservation Society against Intramuros administrator Dominador Ferrer Jr. for a similar offense, construction of restaurant buildings on top of the Intramuros walls, has reached the Supreme Court.

Taal Church

The Basilica of Saint Martin of Tours in Taal (Batangas) is one of the most majestic churches in the country. Designated as a National Shrine, any alterations to the structure must be approved by the NHI.

Last year, an adoration chapel was constructed in one of the church courtyards despite NHI suggestions that the construction threatened the fragile structure of Taal Church. The NHI recommendation that the chapel be installed in one of the empty rooms in the cavernous Taal *convento* was ignored. Construction proceeded.

The NHI board thereby asked the church administration to demolish all construction but the latter disregarded the order. This is clearly in violation of the NHI mandate that gives it jurisdiction over Taal Church.

Reports from Taal say that the parish priest requires parishioners who attend Mass in the church to sign a petition against the demolition of the chapel.

The controversy with the Taal parish priest is typical in the Philippines, where the church attitude is that they are not covered by civil laws that protect heritage. Many priests are blind to the fact that churches are an important part of Philippine patrimony.

Therefore priests are custodians of these churches on behalf of the Filipino people, who have every right to demand protection of their church heritage. It is actually an honor for a priest to be a custodian of heritage.

Lessons from vigilantes

These responses show that there is now an increasing interest to learn what is truly Philippine heritage, and that many are committed to assuring that our heritage will survive in one piece so that we will still have something to hand down to future generations.

Another lesson is that protective legislation is no assurance for preserving heritage. Many government agencies, church authorities, and private individuals cavalierly choose to disregard the laws and ram their own agendas through.

As an example of disregarding heritage laws, remember the controversy over the Lapulapu statue erected in Rizal Park. The erection ignored the NHI ruling that only monuments to Rizal could be constructed in the park that bears his name. How has that issue been resolved?

My own lesson is that the responsibility of our generation is to protect heritage to the point of being able to deliver whatever remains of it to our children, and it is now up to them to take preservation to the next level. And with the interest of the youth in heritage these days, it might be in better hands in the future than it is now.

We still need heritage vigilantes to blow the whistle. Or else we won't have any heritage left for our children, so keep your eyes open.

Remember that the best contact is the Monuments and Sites Committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts info@ncca.gov.ph, fax 5272191. They will either act on your concern or forward your concern to the right party.

E-mail your feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com

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(FROM LEFT) Alejandro Roces, Nick Joaquin and F. Sionil José

2005 NATIONAL ARTS MONTH

National Artists' works dramatized on radio

SOMETIME before National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin passed away in April 2004, he was ecstatic that finally, after years of exchanging mere smiles with his "manicurista," they now had something to talk about: a Joaquin masterpiece had been put into drama and serialized over DZRH-AM which she had heard the night before.

Joaquin's work, together with those of two other National Artists for Literature, F. Sionil Jose and Dr. Alejandro Roces, will be translated into Filipino and popularized through drama, to bring these masterworks to the masses through Radyo Balintataw.

The special month-long presentation is in observance of the National Arts Month 2005 this February, spearheaded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Theme of the celebration is "Crafting Identities for Social Transformation" as this year's theme.

Radyo Balintataw, first organized in 1992 from the award-winning TV series, is produced, directed and hosted by NCCA executive director and presidential assistant on culture Cecil Guidote Alvarez, together with INQUIRER columnist Belinda Olivares Cunanan.

"These beautiful masterpieces of our national artists must not be left to scholars and literature enthusiasts. They not only showcase our distinct Philippine culture and traditions as a people but also impart important lessons and moral values. We must break them down to mediums easily understood by the masses," Alvarez said.

All throughout February, Radyo Balintataw features Nick Joaquin's "Larawan" (translated by Alfred Yuson and Franklin Osorio, radio adaptation by Leonor Asistio); F. Sionil Jose's "Balete Tree," initially staged by Peta (translated by Rody Vera, radio adaptation by Leonor Asistio); Dr. Alejandro Roces' "Stories of Humor and Wit: 'Mild Drinkers' and 'Durian'" (translated by Prof. Tomas Ongoco, radio adaptation by Isagani Halamanan).

On the last week of February, prize-winning plays in NCCA's one-act playwriting contest, "Timpalak Teatro Bulawan," will be featured in Radio Balintataw, selected by Cable News Network (CNN) as an outstanding drama serial for social change, with an introduction from American actress Jane Fonda.

"We seek to craft drama stories with hypothetical allusions but based on reality, clarifying and detailing graft and corruption. The soap opera series will highlight good examples of true public service that have been rewarded and hailed as a patriotic symbol, while showcasing examples of corruption that have been punished," Alvarez said.

Alvarez will lead the cast of the radio drama, together with Lily Gamboa O'Boyle, Ben Medina, Bonjin Bolinao, Bryan Homecillo, Eloisa Cruz Canlas, Fernando Josef, Lex Amores, Jun Legaspi, Phil Cruz, Art de Guzman, Nellie Valdez, Joe Lad Santos, Ros Olgado, Mike Perez, Bernie Bascao, Vilma Estillore and Hexilon Alvarez.

Radyo Balintataw is aired daily over AM station DZRH, Monday to Friday, from 9-9:30 p.m., and on Sunday, from 9:15-10 p.m., with the support of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Free arts workshops

THE NATIONAL Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) will hold Artshop 2005 during the whole of February.

The workshops on basic creative movements in dance for children between 7-10 years old will be held every Tuesday (Feb. 8, 15 and 22), 3-6 p.m., while the workshops on basic theater lessons for participants between 12-15 years will be held every Thursday (Feb. 10, 17 and 24), 3-6 p.m.

Poetry writing workshops for young adults, ages 13-20 years old, will be held every Monday and Tuesday (Feb. 7, 8, 14, 15 only), 3-6 p.m., while the workshop on choir singing for children, 10-13 years old, will be conducted every Saturday (Feb. 12, 18, 25), 8 a.m.- 12 p.m.

Workshops on painting will be given on Feb. 11, 3-6 p.m. and is open to participants ages 10-16.

Weekend workshops on Feb. 12 and 13, 19 and 20, 26 and 27 (Saturday, 3-5 p.m., Sunday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.) include the workshops on playing an ensemble of different stringed instruments like banduria, octavina, piccolo, guitar with contra-bass and drum set for children ages 10-13 years old; and workshops on basic martial arts technique to participants ages 6 years old and above.

All workshops are free and will be held at the NCCA Building, 833 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Call Irma Mendoza at 5272192 local 303 or log on to www.ncca.gov.ph.

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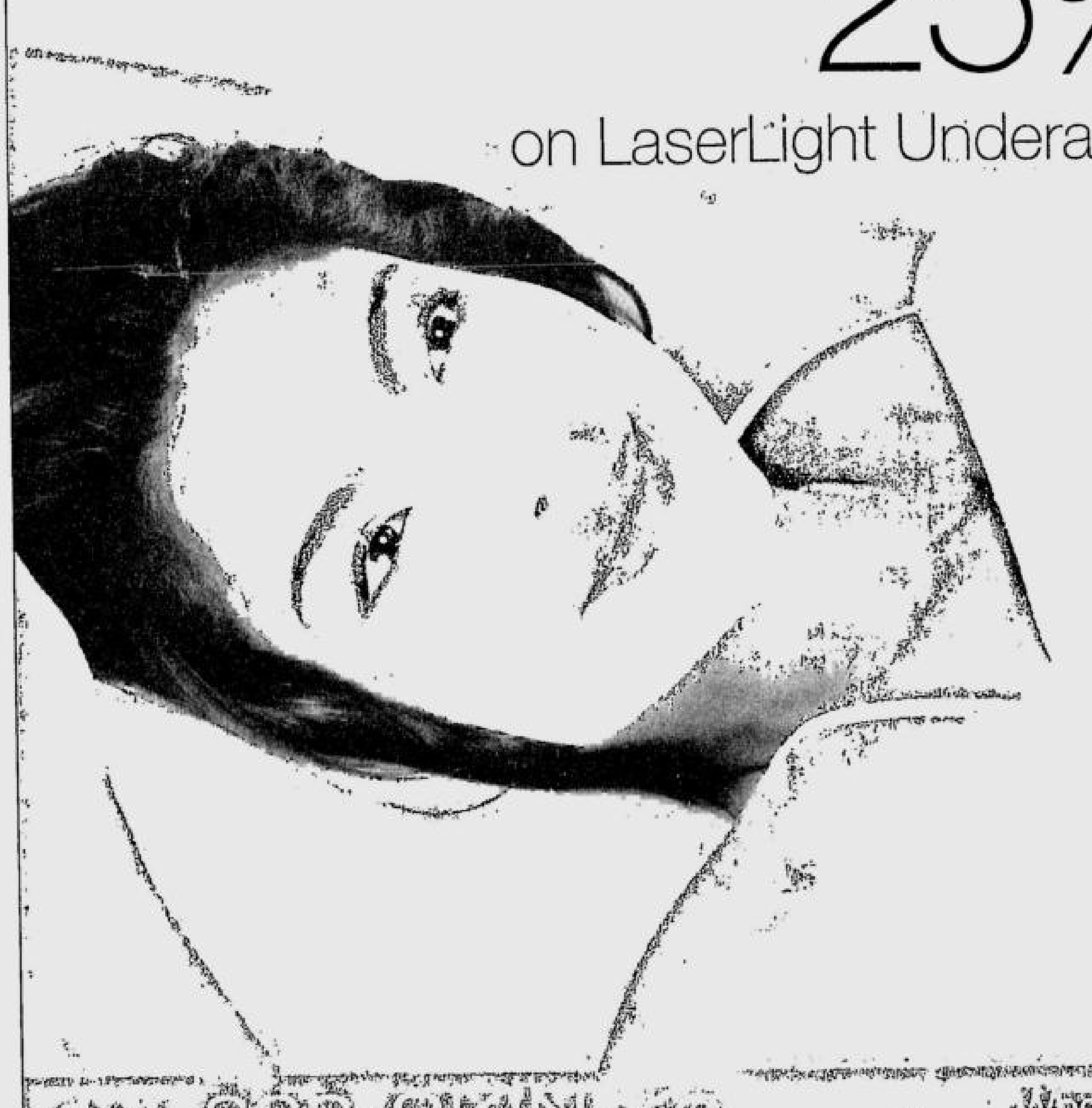


Black hearts at play

By Gibbs Cadiz

NEIL Ryan Sese in TheaterNow's "Laro," directed by Floy Quintos

AT the end of "Laro," Floy Quintos and Miguel Castro's incendiary new play on twisted love among urban gay men, 10 actors engage in what must be the longest, most unsettling orgy scene in Philippine theater ever.

It's not particularly explicit, if by that is meant the amount of skin bared onstage. Nudity in this case takes a backseat to carefully choreographed blocking and movements, effective lighting and manufactured smoke to suggest the heights (or lows) of homosexual abandon.

At the end of the debauchery, the actors untangle themselves one by one and spread out across the stage. You would think they'd look blissful after the kinky fun they've just had, but there is no joy in their faces. Only exhaustion.

They search for hungry eyes in the audience and, in flat, lifeless voices, say over and over, "*Tara*," "*Tena*," until the blood-red lights fade out.

Call it an invitation to hell.

The 10 characters are players locked in a fervid cycle of deceptive, dangerous games, each one more high-stakes than the last, every one a warped offspring of the human need to connect and find some semblance of affection—at any price, if necessary—in a world gone cold.

Bleak material

"Laro's" structure—10 interlocking stories, each vignette featuring two actors, one of whom moves on to become half of the next featured pair—is based on Arthur Schnitzler's 1900 play "Der Reigen" (more popularly known as "La Ronde").

Set in fin-de-siecle Vienna, the play is a bleak romantic roundelay that traces the flings and flirtations of 10 prototypical individuals of that period—Prostitute, Soldier, Count, etc. The material has always been provocative for its stark view of love as a petri dish for all sorts of pestilential human behavior.

In Schnitzler's view (also reiterated in "Eyes Wide Shut," Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Schnitzler's novel "Traumnovelle"), the search for love and emotional security can often lead down squalid passageways where violence, abuse, power and brutality become the soul of human company and the currency of their transactions.

All that bloodletting can only result in bloodless facsimiles of lives, and, in Schnitzler's universe, it does with horrifying precision.

That sensibility has always resonated in works set in materially abundant eras with patrician societies grown dull and flaccid (Choderlos de Laclos' "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" for pre-Bastille France, for instance, or Bret Easton Ellis' "Less Than Zero" and David Rabe's "Hurlyburly" for Reagan-era America).

But in "Laro," Quintos and Castro's conceit is to situate that destructive anomie in present-day Manila, in its small but volcanically complex gay society where, for all its surface urban freedom, tribal passions still reign and the terrain of kindred connections often feels like a battlefield.

> The lines have the ring of unforgiving certainty to them, giving "Laro" tremendous power

MARCUS Madrigal and Rolando Inocencio

The conceit works, chiefly because the playwrights have apparently parked their inhibitions elsewhere to come up with dialogue that's remarkable for its clarity as for its casual, if bitter, truth.

Strong suit

The writers' familiarity with the milieu is the play's strongest suit. The lines have the ring of unforgiving certainty to them, and the work, directed by Quintos, acquires tremendous power from that honesty.

The audience may find itself wincing more than once at the brutal portraits drawn up in "Laro." The dialogue that opens the play, between a policeman and a call boy, ends up in an unexpected act of violence. That gesture repeats itself in ever more painful guises as the cop moves on to a transvestite performer, the transvestite meets up with his lover, the lover goes on an eyeball with an anxious kid, and so on.

Along the way, "Laro" becomes a bracing meditation on identity, longing and survival, as the characters acquire new shadings to curtain their true selves. The brutish cop bottoms to the cross-dresser, the naive call boy dreams of finding love, an aging philanthropist mocks all notions of it, and an "ideal" gay yuppie turns out to be a serial cruiser.

These characters are stereotypes, yet by the end of the play they have undergone revelatory transformations. They remain desperate creatures, but somehow some chink in their cold carapace has rendered them more vulnerable, more recognizably human.

Brave cast

This kind of quicksilver evolution (each vignette lasts for only about 15 minutes) is difficult without the right cast, but fortunately "Laro" is populated with talented actors who bravely go over the cliff with the material.

The sharpest episode, between the gay yuppie and his listless young lover, is played by Castro himself and Jomari Jose. Here, the playwrights' obvious experience with upper-middle-class, gentrified lives with all their soft linens, scented candles, Starbucks and Ikea furniture produces a hilariously crisp satire of gay bourgeoisie. Greenbelt denizens are welcome to sit through this segment without flinching.

Peter Serrano is excellent as the cross-dresser, and he is greatly aided by his character's tart one-liners. At the other end of the spectrum is Neil Ryan Sese, who brings feral force to his portrayal of an action star/underwear model who beds with the jaded philanthropist (Rolando Inocencio).

The dialogue between this pair is the play's most philosophical, touching as it does on the meaning of physical beauty and the limits of self-satisfaction to someone rich enough to buy everything he wants. But that moment is brought down to earth by a startlingly sexual, predatory twist.

The call boy, whose desire for simple affection makes him the play's "conscience," if you will, is played by Lloyd Vincent Barredo (ably subbing for Marcus Madrigal). Barredo is a hunk with the face of a choirboy, and that combination makes him an ideal choice for the role.

John Dekster Santos, Julien Mendoza, Perry Escaño and Richard Signey round up the strong cast. We have no idea who's straight and who's gay among them, but all together, and without the slightest twitch of doubt or inhibition, these actors bring "Laro" to terrific life.

When they utter, "*Tara, tena,*" at the end of the play, think of it not only as a cautionary peek into lives marked by shadows and rot, but also as a potent finish to a work of theater that gleams darkly, like a black pearl.

"Laro" will have a repeat run Feb. 17-19 at Republic of Malate. Call 8995745 or 8963503.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

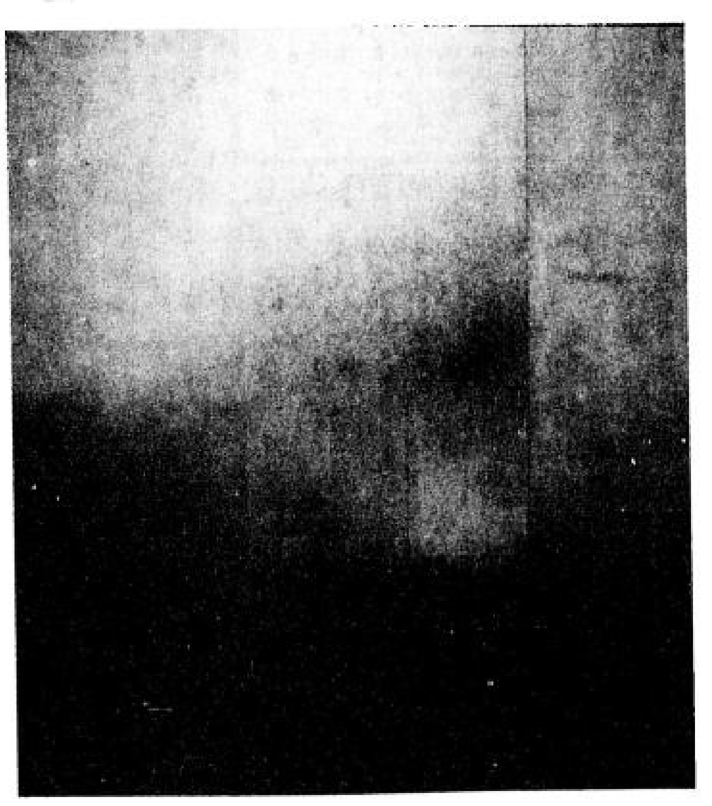
Exhibit on the sacred and the profane at CCP

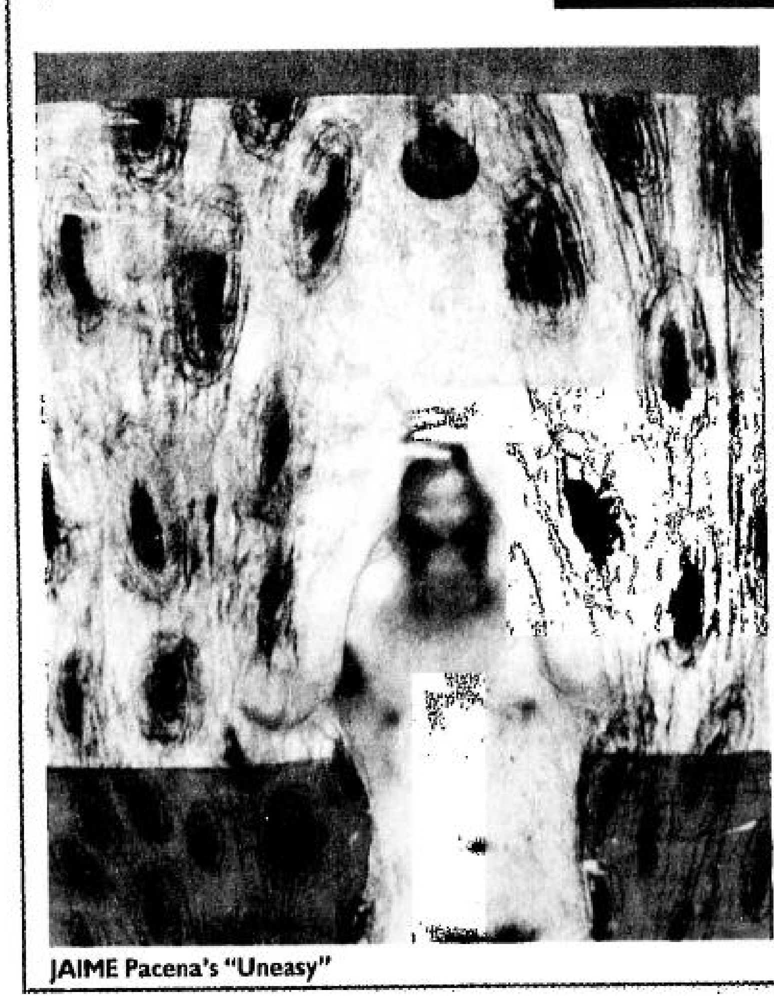
THE EXHIBIT "dog-god," the touring group show of the Young Thomasian Artists Circle (Ytac), will open on Feb. 10, 6 p.m., at Bulwagang Juan Luna, main gallery of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

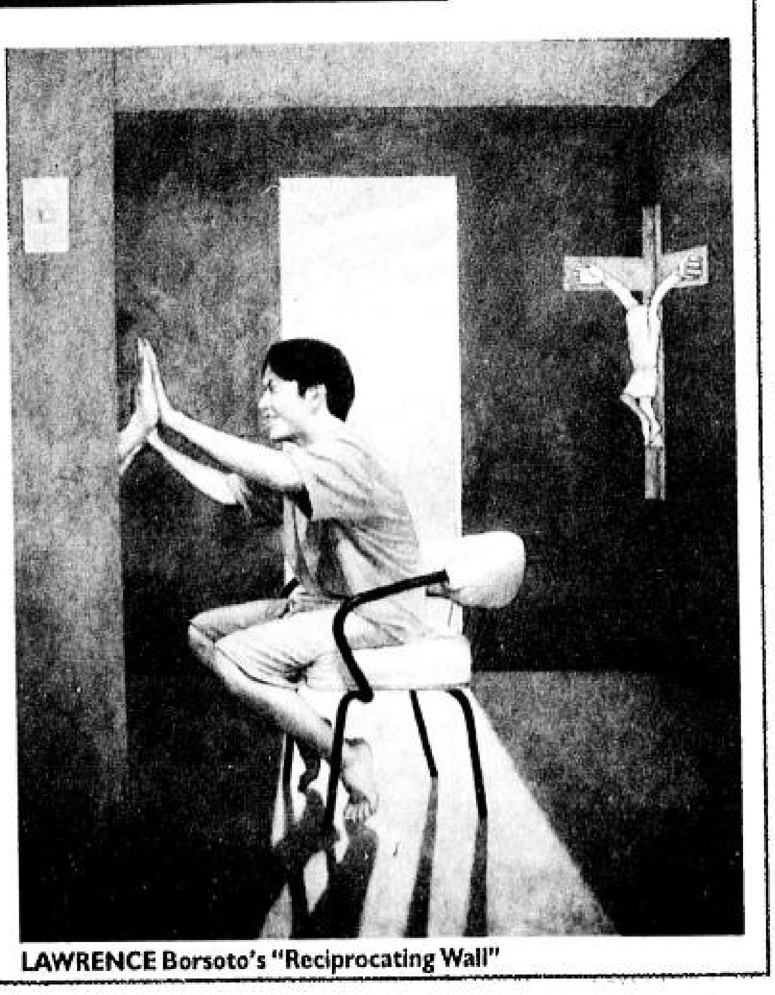
The exhibit is UST's contribution to the 2005 National Arts Month. It's an expanded version of the inaugural exhibit of Ytac which opened on Jan. 10 at the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences. Curated by UST Museum director and UST secretary-general Fr. Isidro Abano, O.P., and, Prof. Jocelyn Tullao, the exhibit focuses on the sacred and the profane, with the artists drawing on their stylistic, social, spiritual and psychological resources.

Participating are award-winning young artists, some of them faculty members of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design: Wesley Valenzuela, Jaime Jesus Pacena II, Andres Barrioquinto, Ivan Roxas, C.J. Tanedo, Lawrence Borsoto, Lindslee, Mark Magistrado, and Buen Calubayan.

To be launched during the opening is a catalogue to the exhibit with critical notes by artist José Tence Ruiz.


MARK Magistrado's "Descent"


JAIME Pacena's "Uneasy"


LAWRENCE Borsoto's "Reciprocating Wall"

Alliance Française features Nena Saguil

IN celebration of the National Arts Month, Alliance Française de Manille proudly pays tribute to Nena Laconico Saguil, now remembered as a remarkable female figure during the early post-World War II era.

Saguil lived a humble and productive three decades in the competitive art environment of Paris. Known to have been married to art, she passionately continued painting until the late years of her life. Her workshop and home in the city of lights is now a protected cultural heritage, and a popular stop for tourists and artists.

Saluting her excellence, the French cultural center shall be providing a rare experience for lovers of art. The Alliance Total Gallery presents a Week exhibit entitled. "The Paris Years: 1954-1994," displaying some of Nena Saguil's paintings which are now in the possession of a number of art collectors and the Ateneo Art Gallery.

Masterpieces such as "The Island" (1970), "Paris at Night" (1956), and "Alembong" (1949) are included in an impressive list of artworks to be installed for public viewing.

"The Paris Years: 1954-1994" opens today at the Alliance Total Gallery, 209 Nicanor Garcia Street, Al Air II, Makati City. Cocktails at 6:30 p.m. Open to the public. Exhibit runs until Feb. 25.

Call 8957585/8957441 or visit the website: www.alliance.ph.

Arts Month activities in Cavite

DE LA Salle University-Dasmariñas joins the celebration of the National Arts Month this February through several activities with the theme "Sining Kabitenyo sa DLSU-D."

At Museo De La Salle, the language and literature department is holding a performative reading of Pablo Neruda's poetry in English while the Cavite Young Writers Association will do a dramatic reading of prose and poetry of Cavite writers from the Revolution up to the present.

Among the exhibits are Heraldo Filipino student publications, multimedia presentations of selected Cavite-based visual artists and works of DLSU-D students and employees. Important cultural and historical sites in Cavite are captured on film or video by the communication arts department.

The Cavite Studies Center will launch Donate a Cavite Word, which will increase the collection of unique lexicons of the Cavite Word Bank. It will also hold the Kapihan sa Aklatang Emilio Aguinaldo forum on Cavite arts.

In the last week, the Student Affairs Office will showcase Cavite songs, dances and traditions at the Tanghalang Julian Felipe. There will be performances by the DLSU Chorale, Filipiniana Dance Company, Points & Flexes, Teatro La Salyano and La Salle Pop and Brass Bands.

NCCA Deputy Executive Director Emilie V. Tiongco will be the guest speaker at the closing ceremonies.

Call 8447830.

Poet Cirilo Bautista in science forum

TOP POET Cirilo Bautista will deliver the lecture "Interfacing Science and Literature," on Feb. 10, 9 a.m., at Fr. Blas Hall of the University of Santo Tomas Main Building.

The lecture is in connection with Science Week 2005 organized by the UST College of Science led by Dean Fortunato Sevilla III.

It is open to the public.

Ballet Manila stages 'Carmen' and 'Giselle'

LISA Macuja-Elizalde and Osias Barroso as Carmen and Don José, respectively, in Ballet Manila's production of Eric V. Cruz's "Carmen"

BALLET Manila will stage romantic ballets for the month of hearts.

The fiery "Carmen" and her sentimental Don Jose are the first to tell their story on Feb. 18, 19 and 20; and the innocent "Giselle" and her forbidden love, Lord Albrecht, will tell theirs on Feb. 25, 26 and 27—at the Star Theater of Star City.

The double treat may be the final opportunity to see artistic director Lisa Macuja Elizalde and artistic associate Osias Barroso in two of their most cherished roles. Guest artist is Nashville Ballet's Christopher Mohnani, who's returning for a rare and special performance.

Included in the first weekend's program are "In Quest," "Deconstructing Gershwin" and two surprise numbers.

Complete your evening with a free "Ride-All-You-Can" bracelet for every purchase of a ticket to any Ballet Manila performance.

MACUJA-ELIZALDE and Barroso in "Giselle"

Call 4043086/ 4000292/ 5255967. Visit www.balletmanila.net or e-mail infoAtballetmanila.net.

THE MIRIAM College High School Glee Club and Cultural Classical Dance Club will have a joint concert on Feb. 11, 7 p.m. Titled "Timeless," it will be held at UP Abelardo Hall Auditorium.

Belgian musicians in Valentine's recital

THE ROYAL Belgian Embassy will present a chamber music recital by noted musicians Tom Deneckere (piano) and Johan Moeyersoons (oboe) on Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m., at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, H.V. de la Costa Street and Makati Avenue, Makati City.

The recital also celebrates the 175th independence of Belgium. It is presented with Equitable PCI Bank and Manila Chamber Orchestra. Call 8784358 to 59.

Buy a book, get free movie tickets

POWERBOOKS Specialty Store brings its customers a new treat which entitles the first 50 customers who purchase a featured "fiction flick" book of the month to two free movie tickets.

"The Broker" by John Grisham is February's featured book. The best-selling author's latest thriller follows the story of Joel Backman, an infamous power broker who has just been granted a controversial presidential pardon after spending six years hidden away in a federal prison.

What no one knows is that he was granted pardon because, back in his power broker heyday, he may have obtained secrets that compromised the world's most sophisticated satellite surveillance system.

The first 50 customers who purchase "The Broker" from Feb. 1-15 will get two tickets to a special screening of a John Grisham movie on Feb. 23 at the Greenbelt 3 My Cinema.

The first 25 attendees will get a free popcorn bucket, a free softdrink, and a free gate pass to Timezone. Buyers also have a chance to get a free parking stub and a chance to win one of six John Grisham book sets.

See posters or approach a PowerBooks customer service counter for more details.

Powerbooks Specialty Store is a full-service specialty bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428/29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang (8505662 to 63) and Glorietta (7527075).

Sue Grafton is PowerBooks author of the month

"DON'T let that ex-husband get you down... just start a whole new job!", author Sue Grafton once said in an interview, which was exactly what she did in the early 1980s while in the middle of a bitter divorce.

The result is the highly successful "Alphabet Murder Mystery" series which introduced to the reading public the rough and tumble female private investigator Kinsey Millhone.

The books in the series, which include such titles as "A is for Alibi," "B is for Burglar" and "C is for Corpse," are all international bestsellers. Her works have been published in Indonesian, Estonian, Bulgarian and 23 other languages in 28 countries.

Small wonder then that PowerBooks Specialty Store has picked mystery novelist Sue Grafton as its February Author of the Month. Her multitude of readers admire her keen sense of detail, characterization and storytelling skills.

Sue Grafton's earlier books, "Keziah Dane" and "The Lolly-Madonna War," are not mysteries though. The latter gave birth to a 1973 film adaptation starring Rod Steiger, Gary Busey and Jeff Bridges.

Grafton then proceeded to write for Hollywood until 1989, becoming a screenwriter for film and television. She started writing her mystery novels in between her scriptwriting assignments. She was also editor of "The Best American Mystery Stories."

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Growing up in the company of artists

By Charissa Onglepho
Contributor

AT THE ASIA Art Gallery at the Art Plaza of Shangri-La Plaza, artist James Onglepho, who's my grandfather, is holding "The Birthday Exhibit" with his fellow artists, Malang and Cris Cruz. The show is a chance for me to see my grandpa, who has always been an inspiration to me, and his artist-friends in a new light.

My grandpa and his friends have been holding the exhibit since 2003 as a tribute to their late friend, National Artist Vicente Manansala. This year, the show is different.

My grandpa said that, first, the artworks in the last two shows were done in color. This year, they used only black and white to bring out the differences and the uniqueness of the images. Second, black and white is very basic for a painter. An exhibition of black-and-white drawings is quite challenging to an artist; it is rare in the current art scene. Third, black-and-white drawings can bring about different effects from those done in color.

Mr. Malang said his current series on women indicates how much he still enjoys art making, particularly, using his latest medium of choice, charcoal.

Mr. Cruz, for his part, said he was learning so much after going back to the basics and working alongside Mr. Malang and my grandpa, both of whom he respects so much.

I missed the opening of the show last Jan. 21 because of classes. But the following day, my grandpa took me again to the Asia Art Gallery to see the drawings personally. I was excited.

Since I was young, I have always seen the paintings of Mr. Malang at the gallery. Of all his great paintings, I love his "Mother and Child" series the most. Sometimes, he simply focuses on the mother's eyes, which express the feelings of the mother, and the impact of a mother's love on a child. The face, the hair, and the clothes show the real, kind, simple, humble, and very loving Filipina.

A young girl finds it her luck to grow with top artists Malang, Cris Cruz and James Onglepho

JAMES Onglepho, Germaine Onglepho, Malang, Charissa and Cris Cruz

Mr. Cruz's artworks are mostly in watercolor. The flowers are realistic, and his colors are very romantic.

Every Saturday afternoon from 1999 until 2002, the Saturday Group of Artists, which Mr. Cruz heads, held their painting and drawing sessions at the Asia Art Gallery. I was always tagging along with my grandpa then, and I would always see Mr. Cruz. I really appreciate his artworks.

Family of artists

I grew up in a family of artists. Since I was born, I have lived with my grandparents. My grandpa and grandma have been taking good care of me for the last 15 years. Because of their great love for me, they gave me their master bedroom, which was complete with all the amenities I could ever ask for.

Since I was a kid, every time I didn't have classes, I was always in my grandpa's studio, watching how he painted. Sometimes, I would start sketching his face. At the age of three, I started learning how to draw and to love art. My grandpa has actually kept all of my works.

By the time I was in high school, I started to love writing. I now write poems, essays and short stories. My auntie Linette and my sister, Germaine, appreciate all my writings.

Family members seldom go to my grandpa's studio, except me. I have seen my grandpa paint from the beginning, how he paints from the first coating, the second coating, and until he puts on the finishing touches. Grandpa often uses oils.

When I was younger, I saw him paint his series of "Lotus and Landscapes," and recently, "Sharing Flowers." These subjects are very oriental in nature.

By the time my grandpa starts to paint, he is relaxed. He is not stressed, and simply enjoys what he is doing. Maybe it is because his feelings influence his paintings with an aura that instills inner happiness.

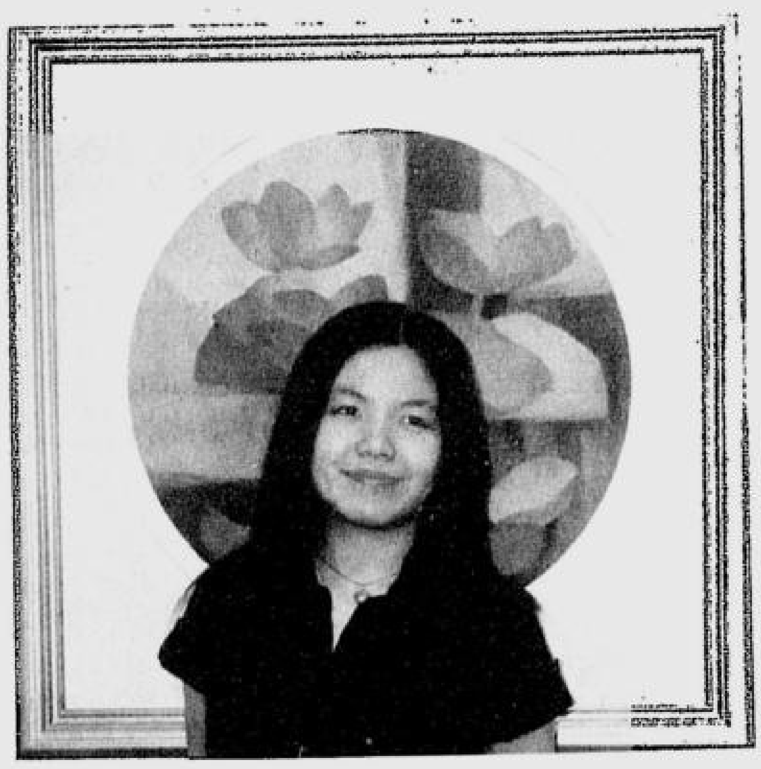
For this year's "Birthday Exhibit," grandpa's ink drawings feature fishing villages, a subject matter that he is doing for the first time. I have seen him draw without using any references. He uses only his memory, imagination and feelings. Little by little, he creates new images.

Grandpa told me that he saw these fishing villages for the first time in 1958, when he was in Zamboanga preparing for his first one-man exhibit. He was always with his friends, aboard a small boat and touring the small islands near Zamboanga City. He sometimes stayed there for a few weeks.

The sketches he made back then might have been lost, but his memories of the scenes he saw are still intact.

For the black-and-white drawings, grandpa used ink on rice paper, a medium made in Japan. The quality is not the same as that of Chinese rice paper, but it is just as durable.

My grandpa's black-and-white drawings are different from his oil paintings. I like them, but in my mind, if one day he would paint the fishing villages in oil, I think they would be in a unique realm.



THE AUTHOR

International music camp holds concert at CCP

THE FIRST Asia-Europe Music Camp will end tomorrow, Feb. 8, with a grand concert at 7:30 p.m. at the Little Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

To be played are original compositions that were finalized in the music camp such as "Two Silhouettes," by Shen Yee of China, "Dancing Delusions" by Nilo Alcala of the Philippines, "Icore" by Goncalo Lourenco of Portugal, "En Route" by Americ Goh of Singapore, and "Binalig," Panangpit," and "Holdoyon Kuy Diwata" by Bob Aves of the Philippines.

The camp has been going on since last week at the National Arts Center in Mt. Makiling, Laguna. It brings together young instrumentalists and composers from Belgium, China, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, South Korea, Lithuania, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain and Thailand.

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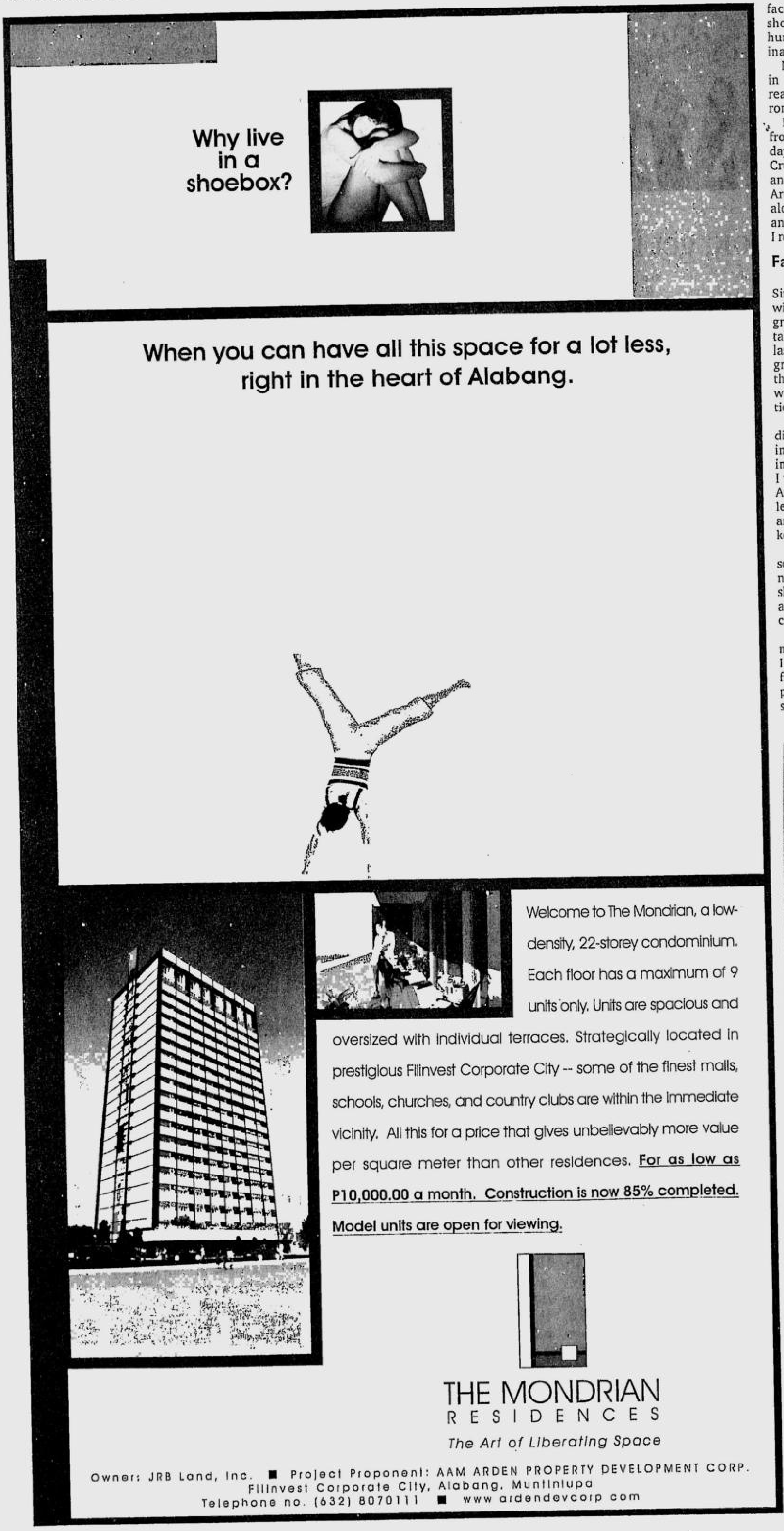

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Still finding beauty queens after all these years

By Armin Adina

THANKS to Ferdie Syquia Villar, the late great movie actor Fernando "Ronnie" Poe Jr. will forever be known as Da King.

It was Ferdie who came up with the Box Office King and Queen titles in the 1960s.

Ronnie was named Box Office King of Philippine Movies in 1968 (along with Boots Anson-Roa who was named Queen), but the actor lived up to being Da King many times over and the handle stuck.

Ferdie, now 67, came home last month from San Francisco where he's been based for three decades now.

He visited the country to supervise a project of the Philippine Medical Mission (PMM) in Quezon and also to accompany Ginger Ann Conejero, reigning Miss Fiesta Filipina-San Francisco.

Ferdie has long been in the business of scouting for beauty queens. From 1966 to 1976, he was the organizer of the Miss Republic of the Philippines beauty pageant, which sent the country's official representative to the Miss World contest.

In his 11-year stint with the local pageant, the country produced two semifinalists and two runners-up for Miss World, including Evangeline Pascual who placed second to USA's Marjorie Wallace in 1973.

In the 54-year history of the international pageant, no other Filipina placed higher than Evangeline.

Ferdie played a key role in the success of many beautiful women such as international model Anna Bayle, actresses Elizabeth Oropesa, Beth Bautista and Suzanne Gonzalez.

Awards

While making kings and queens out of ordinary Pinoys and changing their lives in the process, Ferdie wrote columns for the "Philippine Free Press" and the pre-martial law "Manila Times," and contributed profiles to the weekly "Panorama" magazine.

Ferdie graduated with a degree in advertising and management from the Mapua Institute of Technology and earned his masters in International Advertising Promotions from the University of San Francisco.

In 1960, President Carlos Garcia cited Ferdie as "Most Outstanding Youth Leader in the Philippines" for his work in organizations such as the Manila Teenager Society Circle, Manila Youth Circle, Circulo Novo Ecijano, Sociedad Nasingpet and the Philippine National Red Cross.

In the mid-'60s, he became vice president of the Manila Recording Co. (MARECO). Through his initiative, Mareco struck a deal with international recording companies allowing the firm to distribute foreign records. In the course of his work, Ferdie was able to meet music legends Elvis Presley and Nat King Cole.

WELCOME party for "American Idol" finalist Jasmine Trias, in San Francisco, with Paolo Santos and Nyoy Volante

ROYAL CLUB KING. Ferdie Villar is himself crowned by then Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for his support of anti-AIDS efforts.

WITH 1970's Philippine movie darling Rosemarie Sonora

Martial law blues

When former President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared martial law in 1972, the entertainment impresario packed his bags and left the country.

He turned over the responsibility of searching for the country's representative to the Miss World beauty pageant to the Miss Asia Quest. He similarly gave up the responsibility of choosing the country's Box Office King and Queen to the Guillermo Mendoza Foundation.

But Ferdie's work did not end there.

In San Francisco, he mingled with celebrities and continued his search for Filipino beauty queens. He wrote columns for such US-based publications such as "Philippine News," "Manila Bulletin USA," the Northern California edition of "Asian Journal" and "Celebrity World by the Bay."

In 1994, Ferdie decided to come home. He led the Philippine delegation from the US for the Miss Universe pageant held in Manila.

The following year, he was back home again, this time to work on a medical mission project in the country.

Again he reaped recognition. For his continued support of the Philippine Task Force for AIDS and the PMM, Ferdie was crowned Royal Club King during the years 1994-1997. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was then senator, even crowned him on one occasion.

Ferdie's magic

Today, Ferdie continues to organize annual searches for Miss Fiesta Filipina in San Francisco and Las Vegas. The winners of both pageants become ambassadors of Philippine tourism in their respective areas.

He also organizes parties and programs in the US with Filipino artists. There's the upcoming Little Miss Philippines-USA where girls of Filipino ethnic origin compete. The winner is announced during the Philippine Independence day celebrations.

In spite of all his achievements, retiring is farthest from Ferdie's mind.

"I don't drink, I don't smoke, I'm good for a few more years," he said.

With Ferdie's expertise—some call it magic—he could bring back the country's lost glory in the beauty pageant world, or maybe crown the next king of Philippine movies.

Adventurous Iza takes her career one step further

By Carmela Teresa Almonte

ACTRESS Iza Calzado, who turned in fine performances in such movies as "Sigaw" and "Milan," and in the GMA soap "Te Amo," tries her hand at something new—hosting.

Along with fellow GMA Artists Center talents Chynna Ortaleza and Bettina Carlos, Iza hosts "3R (Respect, Relax, Respond)," an info-tainment show entering its third season.

The pilot episode premiered yesterday.

Asked what subject Iza would love to tackle on "3R," she told the INQUIRER: "How women tend to make men the center of life."

She explained: "That's when his friends suddenly become your *barkada*. You do the things he likes and you tell yourself, 'I'm not doing this for him, I'm doing this because I like it.' Then you realize, '*Teka lang, parang hindi pala* [Wait a second, I don't really like this].'"

Did she ever change anything about herself for the sake of a guy?

In the past, Iza admitted, her entire world revolved around one person. "But I've never regretted anything," she said.

Despite rumors linking her to different men such as TJ Manotoc and Bernard Palanca, she has not had an exclusive relationship since July of last year. She also has not had a boyfriend since she broke up with her non-show biz boyfriend of almost five years.

"I consider myself a hopeless romantic. I long for love, but I don't go looking for it," she said. "If it comes, well and good. If it doesn't, it's not time."

One of the things that convinced Iza to do the show "3R" was the opportunity to reach out to women and share her beliefs with them.

"I'm passionate about the idea of empowering women. This show is such a blessing," she said.

In the show, Chynna is the "*kikay* person," Bettina is the "smart one," while Iza is the "sporty, adventurous type."

"Not really sporty, but more adventurous. I suggested skydiving. I want to do a segment on skydiving!" she said.

IZA CALZADO: No regrets

WITH Bettina Carlos (left) and Chynna Hortaleza, her co-hosts in "3R"

She related that she had a lot of fun as a guest on "Extra Trip," the Paolo Bediones-hosted show now called "Extra Challenge."

She went trekking, rappelling and, at one point, even climbed a mini-waterfall without a harness. Not bad for someone who considers herself *lampa [weakling]*.

"I thought I was incapable of doing these things. Then I realized I just was not given the opportunity. That's why I call myself adventurous. I'll try anything new," Iza said.

First love

Although this is the first time Chynna, Bettina and Iza have worked together, they already consider themselves close.

"We don't have to try hard to get along," Iza said.

A co-production of GMA and Kotex, "3R" focuses on relationships, family and "image issues" and tackles these topics in a straightforward manner that viewers will find easy to relate to.

Iza, who dreams of being interviewed by Oprah, never expected to be part of a "smart and entertaining" show like this.

"Not in my wildest dreams," she said.

Acting, however, remains her first love. She plays Epi Quizon's girlfriend in Peque Gallaga's "Pinoy Blonde" which is produced by Unitel and will be released in July.

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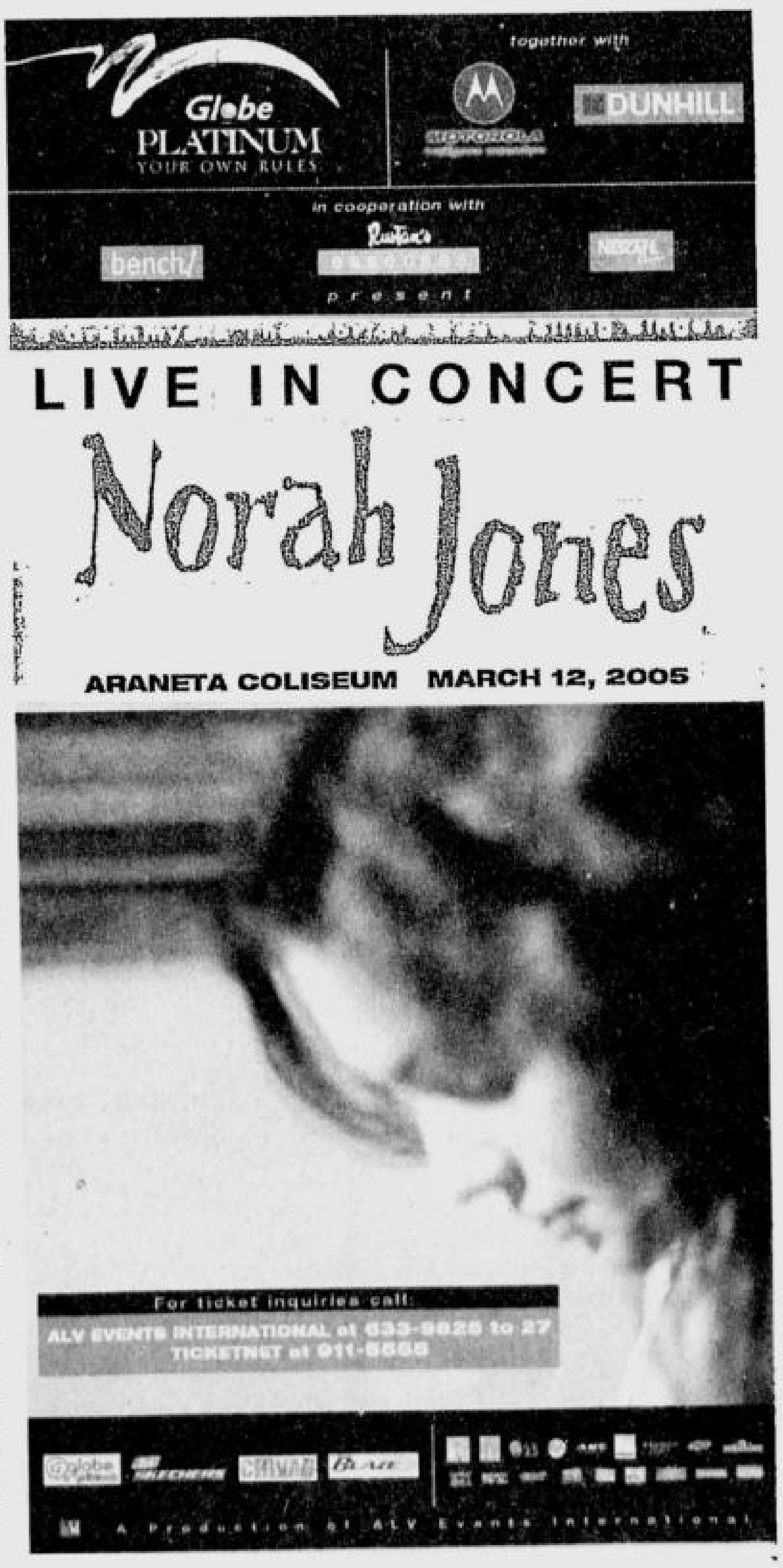

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California's new star: a black kid who sings Chinese opera

TYLER Thompson, center, rehearses with fellow student Carol Liu at Laney College. Behind them is conductor Wan Peng Guo.

AP

OAKLAND—Tyler Thompson isn't much different from other nine-year-olds in his neighborhood. He likes basketball and comic books.

But Tyler has a talent that sets him apart from his peers: He performs Chinese opera.

Growing up in Oakland, a city more notable for its tough streets than its touches of culture, Tyler is bringing crowds to their feet around the San Francisco Bay Area with his uncanny ability to sing in Mandarin Chinese. It's a language he doesn't speak but sings like a native.

"It's shocking for the Chinese. Here's an African-American kid learning an art form that even the Chinese, for the most part, rejected or misunderstood," said David Lei, chair of San Francisco's Chinese Performing Arts Foundation.

He first saw Tyler perform last year at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum.

"He had a good voice and was very accurate in his singing," Lei said.

Tyler quickly became one of Northern California's most popular Chinese music performers, wowing audiences at Oakland City Hall, the Herbst Theater in San Francisco and HP Pavilion in San Jose.

Sticking with it

The San Jose event was filmed by China Central Television, which will broadcast his performance during its annual Lunar New Year extravaganza, a program seen by hundreds of millions in China and elsewhere around the world.

On Saturday, Tyler will be a featured performer at the San Francisco Symphony's annual Chinese New Year concert, just four days before the Year of the Rooster begins on Wednesday. He will sing a Chinese folk song accompanied by a Chinese instrument ensemble.

"Chinese singing has gotten me this far, so I'm going to stick with it," Tyler said.

Tyler learned how to sing Chinese songs as a student at Lincoln Elementary, a public school in Oakland's Chinatown where 90 percent of students are Asian, mostly children of working-class Chinese immigrants.

It's one of the nation's few public schools with a Chinese music program, started 10 years ago by teacher Sherlyn Chew, who was born in Oakland and attended Lincoln as a child.

She teaches students of all backgrounds to sing Chinese songs and play traditional Chinese instruments.

Chew said she first recognized Tyler's talent and his "angelic" voice when he was a spunky kindergartner.

Tyler's mother, Vanessa Ladson, said he always loved music. He grew up singing whatever music his mom played at home, from gospel to jazz and R&B.

Ladson was driving Tyler home from school one day when she first heard him sing in a different language. She couldn't believe it, and asked him to sing the song three times.

"I went home and said to his father, 'Do you know Tyler is singing in Chinese?'" Ladson said.

Good tones

Tyler doesn't speak Mandarin, but Chew taught him and other students who didn't speak Chinese by spelling out the words and teaching them how to sing with the correct pronunciation and intonation.

"Each syllable is clear. His tones are very good," Chew said. "He doesn't speak the language, but he knows the meaning of the song. He knows what he's trying to convey to the audience."

At Tyler's first performance, during Lincoln's annual spring concert, he sang a Mongolian folk song about a young man who misses his friend in winter: "When the spring comes and the snow melts, I wonder if she will remember me?"

"He sang so well that people were moved to tears. Then I said I'm going to teach him Beijing opera," Chew said, referring to a steadily declining form of Chinese opera that blends highly-stylized dancing, acting, acrobatics and pitched singing that Westerners might find jarring. "It's a lot more complicated, but I thought he was ready."

Tyler said learning to sing in Chinese has helped him solve one of life's biggest questions.

"Now I know what I'm going to be when I grow up... a Chinese music singer."

AP

Donald Trump to Martha Stewart: You're hired

NEW YORK—Hundreds of would-be Donald Trumps and wannabe Martha Stewarts stood in sleet and rain just a block and a dream away from Wall Street on Friday, hoping to be chosen for the real estate tycoon's hit reality TV show or the imprisoned lifestyle mogul's upcoming spinoff.

Trump showed up to greet them in the street and plug his hit NBC show, "The Apprentice," and the Stewart spinoff, for which he is an executive producer.

He fulfilled successive television news crews' requests that he say "Martha Stewart, you're hired"—a play on the catch-phrase "You're fired" that he delivers to hopefuls who don't quite win an executive post in one of his companies.

Stewart could not be present. Her five-month prison term for lying to investigators about a stock sale ends next month.

"I think Martha's hotter now than she was two or three years ago," Trump said. "She's an amazing woman, she's shown tremendous courage." Thousands of candidates for the fourth edition of "Apprentice" and for "The Apprentice: Martha Stewart" will be seen in 28 casting calls around the country this month, producer Scott Salyers said.

"I'm looking for strong, smart people that don't give up, don't know what the word give up is all about," Trump said.

A line of applicants up to five deep stretched more than two blocks long, starting at the back door of the Trump Building which fronts on Wall Street.

First on line was 31-year-old options trader Sean Grant, who arrived at 4:15 p.m. the previous afternoon and waited for more than 17 hours for his "apprentice" audition.

"I want to go wire to wire," he said. "First on line and first at the end." Third in line was 35-year-old Yvette Diaz, who works in luxury apparel sales. "I'm here for Martha Stewart," she said.

"What qualifies me is my interest and knack for entrepreneurial business." Trump said the main thing he enjoyed about his TV show was that it was a success. But he hesitated before suggesting why this might be:

"Because people dig me, OK?"

Reuters

JACKSON on the first day of hearing

Big star, big target, MJ says

WASHINGTON—Michael Jackson, on trial for child molestation, said in an interview with Fox television that his pop star fame made him a target for false accusations.

"The bigger the star, the bigger the target," Jackson said in the interview to be broadcast Saturday, posted on a Fox web site.

"But truth always prevails. I believe in that," the singer was quoted as saying.

Jackson, 46, has denied the 10 charges, including molesting a boy at his Neverland Ranch in February and in March of 2003, plying him with alcohol and conspiracies to kidnap, falsely imprison and extort the boy and his family.

The trial in California was adjourned Tuesday to allow the rival lawyers to examine questionnaires ahead of the scheduled grilling of the 250 prospective panelists retained in the case.

Jury selection will take at least one month of the scheduled six-month trial.

Under judge's orders, the singer is not allowed to discuss the case directly in his interviews.

"I created Neverland as a home for myself and my children," said Jackson, father of three.

"It gave me a chance to do what I couldn't do when I was little," he explained in the interview. From an early age, Jackson sang with his brothers in the Jackson 5.

"We couldn't go to movie theaters. We couldn't go to Disneyland. We couldn't do all those fun things. We were on tour. We were working hard.

"Other men have their Ferraris and their airplanes or wherever they find their bliss. My bliss is in giving and sharing and having simple innocent fun. The entire world I love is there," Jackson said.

AFP

Director Andy Garcia puts final touches on his 'The Lost City'

MIAMI BEACH, Florida—Cuban-American actor Andy Garcia is putting the final touches on his directorial debut, "The Lost City," a film about a family living through the 1959 Cuban revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power.

Garcia, a Cuban exile who opposes Castro's regime, said here Friday he had finished filming in the Dominican Republic and that the movie was in post-production.

The film is based on the novel by award-winning Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who lives in exile in Britain.

The movie is about "impossible love for a woman, and the woman in this case represents the island," Garcia said.

Garcia was in Miami Beach for the Miami International Film Festival, which featured his role in "Modigliani," in which he stars as the early 20th century Italian painter and sculptor Amedeo Modigliani.

Comparing the United States to communist-led Cuba, the actor said: "The great thing about having a point of view of what's going on in Cuba, (is that) in America... you can have a point of view and you don't get in prison by it, whereas in Cuba you do."

AFP

Zeta-Jones, Robbins win Hasty Pudding awards

CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

TIM ROBBINS

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts—Hollywood stars Catherine Zeta-Jones and Tim Robbins are this year's recipients of the annual Hasty Pudding awards, given by a student drama group at Harvard University.

The awards, announced Wednesday, are given to performers who have made a "lasting and impressive contribution to the world of entertainment," by Hasty Pudding Theatricals, the oldest undergraduate drama troupe in the United States.

Zeta-Jones will lead a parade through the streets of Harvard Square on Thursday.

Zeta-Jones, 35, earned a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role in the film "Chicago."

Robbins, 46, earned a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his work in "Mystic River."

Last year's recipients were Sandra Bullock and Robert Downey, Jr.

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Call 832-1125 local 1604, 1605.

HE JUST wanted to know "really practical" stuff.

Keanu Reeves trains with real exorcist for roley

HONG KONG—Hollywood star Keanu Reeves said Thursday he trained with an exorcist for his latest film "Constantine," and he was relieved that no supernatural forces plagued the movie set.

"There were no paranormal events that took place on the film that I know of. Thank God!" said Reeves, 40, who plays the title character in "Constantine"—a man who battles to send demons back to hell.

He described his character as a "world-weary" and "nihilistic guy with a heart of gold."

Adapted from a DC Comics series, the film will have its world premiere in Hong Kong on Tuesday—10 days before its opening in the United States.

"I went with an exorcist for a bit. I just want to know really practical things, like how do you hold someone possessed by the devil,' said Reeves, visiting Hong Kong for the first time.

The star of action thrillers "The Matrix" and "Speed" said his latest role also makes him less skeptical about the existence of hell.

"Constantine kind of knows it's a fact. So I guess if I had any doubts before, I probably have a little few less doubts now," he said.

Reeves said he enjoys playing the savior-like characters in "The Matrix" or "Constantine."

"They are pretty classic Western hero myths stories. They are fun to play. They offer something for people to think about."

AP

'My Funniest Valentine'

TIRED of traditional Valentine mush?

"My Funniest Valentine" is the wacky alternative this year. K and the Boxers, Dingdong Dantes and Rufa Mae Quinto star in the concert set Feb. 15, 9 p.m. at Soundstage in Cainta.

The unusual cast is set to entertain its audience with risque antics, on top of songs, dances and spiels on falling in and out of love.

"I'm sure everyone will have fun," says Dingdong. "I had fun myself working with K and the Boxers and, of course, Rufa Mae Quinto."

(For inquiries, call 0917-5349373 or 0917-8177926.)

SHOW TIME

Koiné comedies

KOINÉ Theater Foundation presents two comedies—"Red Carnations" and "The Case of the Crushed Petunias"—at the One Acts Theater all Fridays and Saturdays of February, at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets will be available at the lobby on a first-come, first-served basis. For bookings, call 4104485 or text 0916-525-1038.

Nicotina dinner

Valentine at Nicotina Garden Pavilion on Roxas Boulevard will be celebrated Feb. 12 to 14 with a special dinner prepared by chef Heny Sison, and "For the Love . . ." featuring topnotch live bands. Call 551-7906 for reservations.

VIVA Hot Men

RUFA Mae Quinto

REBEKAH

Russell Watson at PICC

"AN EVENING with the Voice: Russell Watson" is the big happening on Feb. 10 at the PICC Plenary Hall.

Ima Castro will do a special number, plus a duet with Watson on "The Prayer."

British conductor Sir William Hayward will conduct the 60-piece San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and the 40-member San Miguel Master Chorale.

For tickets, call Ticketworld at 8919999.

Chips and Ale at Club Mwah!

ON VALENTINE'S Day, Feb. 14, Club MWAH! at 3F, the Venue Tower, 652 Boni Ave., Mandaluyong City presents "Chips and Ale (A Boyleque Revue)" featuring the Viva Hot Men and friends.

Inspired by the Chippendales show in Las Vegas, the show will have the gorgeous hunks perform scintillating striptease numbers.

Tickets on first-come, first-served basis. Call 5357943 or 6316009.

Saguijo's Videoke Nights

CELEBRATE the videoke machine with rock 'n' roll at Saguijo on Feb. 12, starting at 9 p.m. The show, "Revolver: Five Videoke Nights—You Are Professional Singer" features the bands Drip, Imago, Pedicab, Sun Valley Crew and Wolfmann.

Guests can join the "Search for the Ultimate Videoke Singing Champion." Entrance is P100 inclusive of a free drink. Saguijo Bar is located at 7612 Guijo St., San Antonio Village, Makati City.

Rebekah at Republic of Malate

"LOVE According to Rebekah" goes on stage Feb. 14 at the Republic of Malate, starring one of today's most promising young singers. Her current hit, "Stop," will soon be released as part of a full-length debut album to be produced by E-Real Records, a US-based recording company. Tickets are at P300, inclusive of one drink. For tickets, call 5517253 to 55.

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A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20
WITHOUT A PADDLE 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
ELEKTRA 1:50 4:20 6:50 9:20
MEET THE FOCKERS 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

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1	Dolby	ELEKTRA	12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
2	SDDS	ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
3	dts	SHALL WE DANCE	12:30 3:10 5:50 8:30
4	Dolby	A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	12:10 2:50 5:30 8:10
5	Dolby	RACING STRIPES	12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00

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6 GOLD (SDDS) SHALL WE DANCE
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A truly astonishing tale

HEALING the rift between mother and child

By Constantino C. Tejero

REVIEW

"THE STORY of the Weeping Camel" is an anomaly.

An ethnographic as well as animal film documentary, it has been nominated for Oscar Best Documentary Feature, along with docus on prostitution, fast-food culture and murderous rappers. And, directed by Mongolian Byambasuren Davaa and Italian Luigi Falorni, it tells the story of an anomaly in nature.

Animal documentaries are common on TV, particularly on Animal Planet, Discovery and National Geographic Channel, but they're usually rambling features. This one is unique in that it is structured like a story—fable, tall tale and fairy tale rolled into one story of miraculous healing.

It is to the credit of the two tyro filmmakers, who also carefully scripted and lovingly photographed this film, that it has pulled it off without once losing credibility, verisimilitude and that documentary feeling despite the incredulous nature of the tale.

Ugly duckling

It is the tale of a baby camel named Botok, who comes into this world and at once discovers a world of total reality, of lovelessness, cold, hunger, parental neglect, on the harsh desert sand. The viewer instantly recognizes the archetype: the dromedary version of the Ugly Duckling.

It is springtime in Gobi Desert, and the camels' birthing season is almost over. A family of Mongolian nomads is helping with the last few birthing in the herd.

One particular camel is in labor. It takes two days, and a lot of hustle-bustle among family members, before it gives birth to a rare white calf. It is an excruciating sequence.

Probably traumatized by the hard delivery and upset by the sight of this albino creature, the mother camel instantly rejects its young. It would clamp its hind legs, kick or bite whenever the baby camel snuggles up to feed. Hurt, the calf would whimper away in dejection.

Traditional ritual

The family tries to reconcile the two, in a process that's just as excruciating as the birthing. They would push the frightened baby camel to its mother to let it suckle, and hold back the angry mother camel from trudging away so that it may nurture its offspring.

When all else fails and everyone seems desperate, the grandfather recalls a traditional ritual of the nomadic tribe. It is the playing of sad music to melt the heart of the mother camel, to move it to tears, to arouse its maternal instinct, so that it may feel tenderness and pity for the calf it has rejected.

The family's children, Dude and Ugna, are sent off on a journey across the desert to find a musician in the nearest village of Aimak. (The boys' brief stay in the town center constitutes a subplot that disrupts the narrative but enriches the theme.)

Back in the desert, the clan gathers around on the sand for the musical ceremony. When strains from a stringed instrument accompanied by a plaintive chant waft in the desert air, the beast perks up its ears, its face softens, its eyes narrow, and tears begin to roll, as it listens to the saddest music in the world.

That particular scene is a real feat for the filmmakers. We won't know how they train these beasts to react on cue. We can only marvel at the animal performances, which run the gamut of emotions from ferocious to terrified to compassionate. We assume those are real tears the camel sheds—no camera trick, tear-inducer or digital effects there.

Raves

"Magical and touching… a genuine miracle!" raves The Times.

"Absolutely priceless!" rants Empire.

"Sublime… astonishing!" gushes The Observer.

"One of the most enchanting and though-provoking documentaries of all time," swoons The Daily Mail.

And they might be right. It is an indication of the film's importance that it had been screened at the Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

It was a smash hit in China. It is now touring the festival circuit from Toronto to Berlin, to a mounting chorus of acclaim.

DIRECTOR Luigi Falorni

Everyday rituals

A touching story combined with exceptional aural and visual aesthetics makes it a lovely and popular film.

Unlike Hollywood movies, where the music swells at the opening of a door or whips violins at the drop of a tear, this one has no soundtrack. Yet it attains poignancy with just some improvisatory plucking of strings and primitive incantation.

There are places conducive to fine photography, and the desert is one of those. Here beauty is inherent in the landscape, and the terrain readily provides the design and composition of the shots. An instance is that indelible image of the profile of a camel against the full moon—that can't be anywhere but the desert.

While it is true that geography plays a big role in cinematography, from the quality of the light to the feasibility of angles, major credit should still go to the cinematographer's skill and instinct in composing this austere and haunting film.

Davaa and Falorni have acknowledged as inspiration Robert Flaherty, whose seminal works "Nanook of the North" and "Man of Aran" have long defined the ethnographic film. As with Flaherty's, the film combines recreated scenes and documentary footage.

Parallel to the animal story is a fascinating record of the nomadic family's everyday rituals, from the grandmother's morning prayer to the cooking of meals, to the bathing of the youngest child, to the preparation against a sandstorm.

Unlike Flaherty's, however, the film merges ethnography and fable to portray a quiet tribal culture that's slowly vanishing, a simple way of life that's quickly being eliminated.

But the film doesn't preach. The encroachment of modernization is wryly depicted in brief scenes of Ugna covetously eyeing a television set and a Gameboy while in Aimak, and, at film's end, quick shots of the boys with a TV set in the parlor and a satellite dish ready to be be fixed atop the family tent.

The film is both sad and happy, disheartening and triumphant (well, just like life). At its heart is a basic story of family, community and connection, that any child can understand.

But it doesn't feel Disney at all. It is emphatically cinéma vérité.

Gloria Romero's hands tell all the stories in new indie film

FILIPINO movie icon and award-winning actress Gloria Romero stars in an independent production written and directed by Mia A. Buenaventura.

"Gantsilyo" is the first short independent project for Romero and the second film of Buenaventura, a Gawad CCP awardee.

The movie tells of a grandmother whose elaborate knitted creations have wondrous effects on members of her family. From marital spots to teen issues, Grandma has an uncanny way of resolving their problems.

Armed with her needles and balls of yarn, Grandma employs time-weathered wisdom and loving hands to heal hearts with every stitch.

MIA BUENAVENTURA, director (right), "took a chance" and offered the part to the illustrious actress. The gamble paid off: "She loved it."

"Gantsilyo" also stars theater performers Kokoy Palma, Kim Diaz, Paulyn Villafuerte and Vida Nael.

"I've always been fascinated by old and veiny hands," Buenaventura says. "Hands can be such eloquent symbols of love and nurturing. What more if they have that added character of age? I thought how great it would be to make a film that had several close-up shots of veiny hands because these alone could tell a wealth of stories. Out of this inspiration came the idea for 'Gantsilyo.'"

Buenaventura is no newcomer in the indie movement. A product of Mowelfund and a graduate of Communication Arts at the Ateneo, Buenaventura's first film was the experimental "Leon," her Gawad winner, done in 16-mm format and starring character actor Ronnie Lazaro.

Production of the low-budget film "Gantsilyo" was made possible with the committed support of its actors and a team of technical and production experts who believe that the independent cinema would usher in a new age of filmmakers.

"I took the chance and wrote Ms Romero about this low-budget film project," Buenaventura recounts. "I was thankful that she loved the story and that she wanted to help independent filmmakers like me. Despite her busy schedule, she has been very gracious and accommodating."

"Gantsilyo" is one of many films that will be screened during the Pelikula at Lipunan Festival organized by Mowelfund. The festival will be held at SM Megamall from Feb. 23 to 27.

Workshop on film-video storytelling

THE FILIPINAS Heritage Library on Makati Avenue across Manila Peninsula will host "Storytelling on Film and Video" on Feb. 12, 19 and 26, March 5, 12 and 19, Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

How you tell a story on film is as important or perhaps, even more important, than the story itself. Through a series of lectures, viewing films for analysis and writing exercises, participants learn such fundamentals as dramatic structure, character development and key story elements like the problem, super want, rising conflict, action and dialogue.

The first three meetings are on the Fundamental Requirements of Story and Storytelling. In the last three sessions, the discussion focuses on mastering the story elements and the principles of story design, leading to the first draft of act one the script. Handouts include copies of film scripts, including "Sixth Sense" and "American Beauty."

Isabel Enriquez Kenny is a writer and published author. Her new book entitled "Making Documentaries in the Philippines" will be released in March. A working screenwriter, she is a lecturer and a producer for Magic Lantern Films. She taught at Boston and Emerson Colleges in Massachusetts, and Loyola University of New Orleans, and was a guest lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles, among others.

Workshop fee is P5,500. Deadline on Feb. 10. Call 892-1801 or e-mail events@fillib.org.ph.

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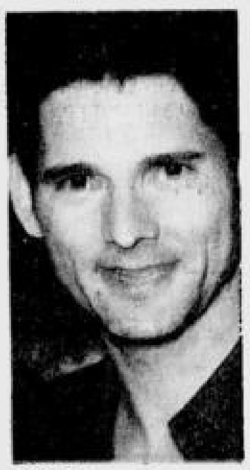

ERIC Bana

CLIVE Owen

HUGH Jackman

EWAN McGregor

Pierce Brosnan says goodbye to 007, search on for next screen super spy

LOS ANGELES—The search is on for a young actor to fill the tuxedo of Agent 007 in the next James Bond film, "Casino Royale," to be based on Ian Fleming's first novel about the suave British spy with a license to kill.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc. said on Friday that filmmaker Martin Campbell has signed on to direct the 21st Bond movie, paving the way for casting to succeed Pierce Brosnan, 51, as the star of the multibillion-dollar film franchise.

Campbell directed Brosnan in his debut as Bond in the 1995 film "GoldenEye."

In a message posted on his official website (http://www.piercebrosnan.com) this week, the Irish-born actor bid farewell to the role he inhabited in four films over nearly a decade, saying, "Everything comes to an end."

MGM and the producers behind the Bond franchise said no decision has been made about casting. Brosnan has suggested that fellow Irish actor Colin Farrell would be ideal for the role, but Farrell has said he was uninterested.

Other young actors whose names have surfaced as possible replacements include Ewan McGregor, Hugh Jackman, Jude Law, Eric Bana and Clive Owen.

Earlier big-screen incarnations of the British agent, starting with the film "Dr. No" in 1962, were played by Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and George Lazenby.

Production on "Casino Royale," slated for release in 2006, will start as soon as the New Zealand-born Campbell wraps up filming on his sequel to "The Mask of Zorro," MGM said.

"Casino Royale" is being adapted from the 1953 Fleming novel that introduced the Bond character.

It also was the title of a feature spoof of the Bond stories released by Columbia Pictures in 1967 starring Peter Sellers, Woody Allen and David Niven.

MGM acquired the title and rights to "Casino Royale" in a settlement with Columbia's corporate parent, Sony Pictures Entertainment. MGM is now in the process of being sold to a group of companies led by Sony Corp.

The Bond franchise is one of MGM's biggest assets. The most recent Bond film alone, 2002's "Die Another Day," grossed more than $425 million in ticket sales worldwide.

Reuters

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